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*A Declaration of my last Sentiments on
the different Doctrines of Religion.*

BY THE LATE

PIERRE FRANÇOIS LE COURAYER, D. D.

AUTHOR of the DISSERTATION on the VALIDITY of
ENGLISH ORDINATIONS—

And Translator of “The History of the Council
of Trent,” by Fra. Paolo Sarpi—And of “The
History of the Reformation,” by John Sleidan.

Published in French, from the MS. of the Author,

By WILLIAM BELL, D. D.

Prebendary of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster.

A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION;

To which is prefixed,

AN ACCOUNT of Dr. COURAYER.

L O N D O N,

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

MDCCLXXXVIII.



ADVERTISEMENT

OF THE

TRANSLATOR.

THE following translation has been given with religious fidelity; a palpable mistake in the original has not been corrected; not a word of the Author has been rejected that could be reconciled to the English idiom; and the Translator has here tried an experiment, with a view

to ascertain, whether strict, and almost verbal translations, certainly the most desirable because the most authentic, might not be given, so as still to preserve something of the air of an original. This may have failed in minuter instances, through the inattention and hurry of the experimenter, but he verily believes at present, that he has given the sense of every sentence of the Author, with truth, and perspicuity. Every thing like a note, or even a periphrasis, has been scrupulously avoided, and the whole province of judgment on the original, has been left, as it ought to be, entirely open, and free to the reader.

The account of Dr. COURAYER has been compiled from various books rather hastily, for the occasion of this little publication. It does not contain much that is new, or inedited; but that little may be entirely depended upon, being taken from the relation of one of the best men now living, who knew the Doctor well, has a great esteem for his memory, and bears a most honourable testimony to his character.

All the information contained in the *Nouveau Dict. Hist.* 8vo. 6 tomes, 1779, under the *Art.* COURAYER, has been introduced into this narrative. The "Biographical Dictionary," in 12 vols. 8vo. 1784, furnished some materials; and so did "ATTERBURY'S Epistolary Correspondence, &c. with Historical notes," vol. iv. 8vo, 1787. But much the best part of the account has been procured from the "Anedotes of Bowyer," 1782, a book replete with biographical knowledge, and curious particulars of literary history.

The public will soon be in possession of more ample memorials, in a Life of Dr. Courayer, written in form, and at leisure,

for the *Biographia Britannica*, by a biographer, whose name is next to Dr. Kippis's, in the edition of that work now under the press. The article, still in an unfinished state, was obligingly communicated by its author, to the writer of this superficial account; but it came too late to have enabled him to refer to it with propriety, and to save him the trouble of drawing up the rough sketch which is here exhibited, with all its imperfections on its head.

With the consent of the author of the unpublished article in the *B. B.* here referred to, previously desired and obtained, part of a translated quotation in that article, from

one of Courayer's books, is prefixed to the following account, and for the principal reason that actuated the writer in the translation, and publication here given, the wish, and the probable prospect of promoting seriousness, and doing good.

" Relation

"Relation Historique & Apologetique, &c."

tom. I. p. 431, 432, 433.

" Born a Christian and a Catholic, I have
 " always endeavoured to instruct myself in re-
 " ligion, with the same zeal, and the same free-
 " dom, I should have believed myself under
 " an obligation to do, if I had taken a part in
 " any other affair which I had conceived to be
 " of the utmost importance. Convinced of
 " the existence of a God, to whom we are in-
 " debted for our being, and who merits on
 " that account our adoration, and our grati-
 " tude; and persuaded that we are created for
 " another life, I have never regarded but with
 " horror

“ horror that indifference, with which the
 “ greater part to mankind live, respecting a
 “ point, the decision of which is of so much
 “ consequence to our tranquillity.——The
 “ more I have studied the Gospel, the more
 “ worthy it has appeared to me of approbation,
 “ and the more worthy of being adhered to.
 “ Nothing is so pure as the worship it proposes;
 “ nothing so exact as the rules it prescribes;
 “ nothing so holy as the life it enjoins; no-
 “ thing so noble as the recompense it leads us
 “ to hope for; nothing is so proper to render
 “ men and societies happy, since, by subduing
 “ our passions to reason and religion, it takes
 “ away the source of our miseries, by taking
 “ away the source of our disorders. It supposes
 “ all natural truths, and destroys none. It re-
 “ forms all vices, and conducts us to the prac-
 “ tice

“ tice of all virtues. It re-establishes in the
 “ minds of men those ideas of justice, of cha-
 “ rity, of temperance, of modesty, and of piety,
 “ which the Author of nature had formed in us,
 “ and which sin had destroyed. Nothing is so
 “ true as that which is said by St. Paul, that Jesus
 “ Christ hath made all things new, and by a
 “ kind of second creation hath rendered us again
 “ capable of righteousness, and true holiness.
 “ The Gospel is a new mission, in which reli-
 “ gion is no more confined within the limits of
 “ a people, or a province; and in which all
 “ men, having the same Creator, are recalled
 “ without distinction to the same laws, and to
 “ the same hopes. It is a new worship, in
 “ which we are taught that there is no other
 “ which is agreeable to *Him*, but that which is
 “ in spirit, and in truth. It is a new morality,
 “ which

“ which does not confine itself to the repressing
 “ those outward actions which are sinful, but
 “ which teaches us to dry up the source of evil
 “ actions, in condemning even evil thoughts
 “ and desires. It operates upon us by new
 “ hopes, and new fears; and it is no more the
 “ expectation of temporal good, or the fear of
 “ temporal evil, by which we are excited to
 “ practice virtue, and to avoid vice. Whatever
 “ is confined to the present life only appears
 “ unworthy of us : and man better instructed
 “ in the grandeur of his origin, and of his end,
 “ cherishes no thoughts but those which relate
 “ to eternity, for which he perceives that his
 “ soul was destined.” T.

A C C O U N T

OF THE

A U T H O R.

P*PETER FRANCIS COURAYER* was born at Vernon, or Rouen, in Normandy, Nov. 7, 1681. His French biographer records nothing of his early life, nor does he even mention his *Traite de Poeme Epique*, a book ascribed to him in the *La France Litteraire*, and probably published before the account given of its

author, in the *Nouveau Dict. Historique*, begins.

It commences with P. Courayer's entrance into the order of Regular Canons of St. Augustine, of which entry it gives no date. It says, he was soon after distinguished for his genius and learning, and that, in consideration of them, he was chosen Librarian of St. Genevieve at Paris. It goes on to say, that his engagement in opposition to the bull *Unigenitus*, obliged him to examine the power of the Roman Pontiff, and the rights of first pastors to judge of doctrine.

It

It is said that, in the course of his enquiries, he was led into opinions contrary to those of the church of Rome, of which he dropped frequent hints in conversation, that gave umbrage to the zealous partizans of that establishment, and alienated their favour and affections from him.

He became openly obnoxious, and was considered as an avowed heretic, on the publication of his "*Dissertation sur la validité des Ordinations Anglicanes*," which was printed at Brussels in 1723, in 2 vols. in 12mo. and reprinted in Holland in 1727.

On

On the first appearance of this work, several learned men, warmly attached to the Popish hierarchy, took the alarm, and presently entered the lists to combat the new system. The Journalists of Trevoux, D. Gervaise, Hardouin the Jesuit, Le Quien a Dominican, and the Cardinal Tencin, were of this number.

The manly Librarian of St. Genevieve withstood their attacks, firm and undaunted ; he receded not in the least ; he made no abject concessions, or equivocal explanations, but much increased the host of his adversaries, and furnished the zealots of his communion with fresh causes of complaint in abundance, by a defence of his
Dis-

Dissertation, which he published in 1725, in 4 vols. 12mo.

It was written with much spirit and vivacity, and in a resolute tone that was thought expressive of scorn. It met, therefore, as his Dissertation had done before, with the marked dislike, and formal condemnation, of a number of Prelates, headed by the Cardinal Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, and was suppressed by a decree of council, Sept. 7, 1727.

P. Courayer had a mind proof against obloquy, and bore the many heavy censures that were passed upon him, with upright fortitude. He was heartened in his

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steadfastness to good sense and integrity, by the welcome reception of his *Dissertation*, and the Defence of it, in England, where they had procured him general esteem, and many cordial and honourable friendships.

In the midst of his struggle with complicated difficulties, he seasonably received from this country, an unsuspicious testimony of regard and approbation, seldom conferred on clergymen of the Popish persuasion. It was a degree of Doctor of Divinity, given by the University of Oxford, dated May 28, 1727.

On

On the first of December following, he returned his thanks to the University in a Latin letter, and apologizes for his having been so late in making his acknowledgements of the honour done him, on the score of his having been taken up in the interval, as he still was, in guarding against "secret snares, or open violence *."

The diploma of the University, and Dr. Courayer's excellent letter of thanks, are preserved in the "Republic of Letters," as quoted below; and in the same volume of that very valuable literary history, the curious may see, a copious and satisfactory

* "*Aut præcavendis occultis insidiis, aut manifestæ vi
declinandæ totus incumbo.*" Rep. of Letters, -vol. I.
8vo, 1728, p. 487.

account of P. Courayer's Dissertation on the Validity of English Ordinations. His letter to the University has the following date : *Dabam Hannemonte prope S. Germanum in Laya, Cal. Dec. 1727.*

Haleanment near *St. Germain-en Laya* was the place to which our author retreated during the time of his disgrace ; where he was visited by Bishop Atterbury, then an exile from his native country, who was by no means a mollifying man, or likely to throw cold water on any spirited resolution, and who, moreover, conceived himself, as he certainly was, interested with the Prelacy of England in the dispute, that involved the Doctor in distress, and a tremendous prosecution.

This

This Bishop's intimacy with P. Courayer, for whom he acknowledges a friendship, and a parting visit from the Librarian, on the evening before he left Paris, occasioned the Prelate some trouble, and produced an unwelcome message to him from the French King, and the Cardinal de Noailles, by the Lieutenant de Police. For the particulars, and the issue of this message, the curious are referred to ARTERBURY'S " Epistolary Correspondence, " with historical notes, &c." vol. iv. p. 97. —116 inclusive, 8vo, 1787.

It is high time to pass from this, which though inserted here, not improperly in point of chronology, is nevertheless a di-

gression. Dr. Courayer's situation and continuance in France became now, every day, more and more serious and critical; and, circumstanced as he was at this time, he found it expedient, and, indeed, necessary, to look out for a sanctuary. The prospect of the many and great evils consequential on an excommunication, levelled at him by the General of his order, was sufficiently alarming, and admitted of no delay. In this anxious situation he had recourse to his friends in England, and determined by their advice (luckily for him), he made choice of this country for his place of refuge.

The

The Abp. of Paris continued implacable; the friendly interposition of this Cardinal's brother, the Marischal de Noailles, could neither prevail on him to drop the prosecution, or to soften its rigour.

About a month, therefore, after the date of his letter to the university of Oxford, in the depth of winter, P. Courayer set out on his journey to Calais in a stage coach, to which place he got without suffering any other inconvenience than what he felt from the inclemency of the season, and there he was obliged to remain for three days by contrary winds. It is said, indeed, that he narrowly escaped apprehension in his way; he got safe, however,

to England, towards the end of January, 1727-8, where he was embraced with open arms.

On his landing at Greenwich, Lord Viscount Perceval, afterwards Earl of Egmont, sent his coach with six horses to convey him to his house, which he desired the Doctor to consider, and to use, as his own; after dinner his lordship made him a handsome present. Next day, Dr. Wake, then Archbishop of Canterbury, had him to dine at his palace at Lambeth, and made him a like present. Bishop Hare, Bishop Sherlock, and several other Prelates, treated him with similar generosity; and, soon after his arrival, the Marquis of Blandford made him

him a present of fifty pounds, through the hands of Nicholas Mann, Esq. afterwards Master of the Charter-house.

Dr. Courayer, at the visit above-mentioned, or on some other early visit after his coming, observed to Archbishop Wake, in a plaintive way, “ that this was a bad
 “ country for a religious man’s residence,
 “ both because of the unhappy differences
 “ of religion, by which mutual charity is
 “ destroyed, and also because of the liberty
 “ which many take of speaking
 “ against the doctrines of Christianity, and
 “ corrupting the minds of the people.”

The Doctor lived here almost half a century after this complaint, and had full
 time

time to be convinced, that England, among other inestimable advantages it has over the country he relinquished, is even preferable in the very respects too hastily complained of. 1. The religions of its sectaries are serviceable, more than is commonly conceived, to the religion of its establishment. 2. The liberty lamented, on this side licentiousness, and exercised as it generally is, and always ought to be, with seriousness and decency, is a kind of native salt, very efficacious, both to prevent, and to ease corruption, in the minds of the people.

——— *Beati, bona si sua norint,*
Anglicolæ. ———

It is pleasing to be able to say, with certainty, to the honour of this nation, that very many of the tables, and houses of the great, were generously opened for the reception of P. Courayer, from the first moment of his arrival in England. He secured his future constant welcome, by his own merits, and an instructive, entertaining, and inoffensive manner of conversation.

He got early into the habit of living, for months together, in one or other of the first families in this kingdom; and at the different habitations of the Countess of Hertford, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, it was not unusual for him to make visits of six months at a time.

He

He did not, however, continue very long a precarious pensioner on the bounty of our nobility, prelates, and gentry, who were not deficient in their generosity, and attention to him. A national pension of 100 l. *per annum* was settled upon him. In 1736, this pension was doubled by Queen Caroline, a munificent patroness of men of letters, and of indigent merit. To her he dedicated his French translation of "F. Paul's History of the Council of Trent," published in that year, and his dedication is penned in elegant strains of lively, and heartfelt gratitude.

By the sale of the translation just mentioned, he cleared, it is said, 1500 l. and was enabled

enabled to give 1600 l. to lord Feverham for an annuity of 100 l. which he enjoyed for almost forty years.

P. Courayer, after his coming into this country, was never in want of any thing that was necessary for him, or that could contribute to the comfort of his life, which he protracted to the very advanced age of ninety-five years. By degrees, and in no great length of time, he got into very affluent circumstances, and was in the receipt of very much more money yearly, than his frugal mode of living required.

He did not, however, hoard up the overplus of his annual income, or suffer his

studious savings to accumulate. His dress, though always remarkably neat, was not costly, not even when he appeared in the habit of a layman, and wore a sword, which he sometimes did, it is said, very awkwardly. He kept no house, he was in no one article of living expensive, and the indigent partook very freely in his good fortune.

Poor prisoners were favourite objects of his charitable disposition, and shared very liberally in his bounty. From the first payment of his pension, it was certainly his custom, and the writer is well assured, that it was not unusual for him, to pay from
fifty

fifty to eighty pounds a year at a time, for their benefit.

It is well known, and well attested, that he was wont to restrict his expenditure on himself, to a very moderate weekly sum; and all that he could possibly save out of his own allotment, with the remainder of his income, never forgetting his charities, he religiously appropriated, to supply the necessities, and to add to the comforts, of two nun-sisters, and an elder brother, whom he left behind him in France.

Money, notwithstanding, grew upon him; and he was rather rich at the time of his death, as appears by his will, of which it
may

may be proper to say something in the sequel. It is not anticipating very far, to mention here, that he left by it, to this elder brother, a lawyer in Paris, and then still living, in 1776, a fine gold snuff-box, which he had received as a present from Queen Caroline.

The Jesuits were universally, and always, Dr. Courayer's bitterest enemies; yet his humanity was excited on the suppression of their order in 1773; and he lamented exceedingly the hardships of many men, rendered by this event perfectly destitute.

He could never be brought to think favourably of Archibald Bower, author of the
 compilation

compilation called, "Lives of the Popes;" but always insisted, from the beginning of his acquaintance with him, that he was a dark man, of a suspicious character, who pretended to have collected from books which he certainly had never seen. The detection, for which the publick was indebted to the ingenuity and laudable pains of Dr. Douglas, verified P. Courayer's suspicions.

It is related, that this pious man, soon after his arrival in London in 1728, offered to confess himself to a Popish priest, in order to obtain absolution. But on Dr. Gourayer's revelation of himself, that priest, it is said, finding he was excommunicated,

or on the point of excommunication, refused to take his confession, and earnestly recommended to the Doctor, an immediate application to his rightful superior at St. Genevieve. We are not told the conclusion of this story; but it may well be conjectured, from what is said under the thirty-second and two subsequent heads of the following Declaration, that the refusal did not give Dr. Courayer any very great, or very lasting uneasiness.

A little anecdote obtrudes itself here on the writer's memory so forcibly, and is so applicable to this circumstance of P. Courayer's history, that though it be somewhat
 ludicrous,

judicious, the reader cannot be greatly displeased at its insertion.

At a time not very remote, when the Duke of Gordon, and all the Lords of that family, were Roman Catholics, a Protestant, not unknown to his Grace, rented a small farm under him, near Huntley-castle, and, from whatever cause, had fallen behind in his payments. A vigilant steward, in the Duke's absence, seized the farmer's stock for arrears of rent, and advertised it by the parish crier to be *rouped*, that is, sold by auction, on a fixed future day. The Duke happily returned in the interval; his tenant, who knew his road, made the best of his way onward to the Duke's

apartment; and he was not interrupted, but forwarded in it, by the servants, who concluded he came by appointment.

“What is the matter, Donald?” said the Duke, as he saw him enter, melancholy. Donald told his sorrowful tale, in a concise natural manner; it touched the Duke’s heart, and produced an acquittance in form. Staring, as he cheerily withdrew, at the pictures and images, he expressed a curiosity to know what they were, in his homely way. “These,” said the Duke, with great condescension, “these are the “saints who intercede with God for me.” —“My Lord Duke,” said Donald, “would “it not be better to apply yourself di-
rectly

“rectly to God? *I went to muckle Sawney
 “Gordon, and to little Sawney Gordon; but
 “if I had not come to your guid Grace’s self,
 “I could not have got my discharge, and baith
 “I and my bairns had been harried.”*

An honest heart always expresses itself well, or inoffensively. The Duke was not angry; and P. Courayer probably retired from his brother’s confessional, much in this man’s way of thinking. Nevertheless, it is said, that for many years, and it may be to the end of his life, he applied for confession, in order to absolution, regularly, at stated times, in consequence, probably, of some religious engagement which he thought it his duty to endeavour

to fulfill. The writer is well warranted to say, that from his strict regard to a vow of this kind, made in early life, he always continued to the last, every day, to say, or repeat his breviary, which was a daily business of more than one hour.

Certainly, when in London, he always continued to attend only places of Popish worship; and he never formally renounced the Roman Catholic communion. The following are pretty nearly, as this writer conceives, the express words in his last will, where he declares, “ that he dies a
 “ member of the Catholic church; but
 “ without approving of many of the opi-
 “ nions and superstitions which have been
 “ in-

“ introduced into the Romish church, and
 “ taught in their schools and seminaries,
 “ and which they have insisted on as articles
 “ of faith, though to him they appear to
 “ be not only not founded in truth, but also
 “ to be highly improbable.”

Nevertheless, at Ealing in Middlesex, a village to which P. Courayer often withdrew, at Percy-lodge, &c. he constantly attended the parish church, and he always expressed great satisfaction in the prayers of the church of England. The Doctor's own words will best explain the sense in which his commendations of *L'Eglise Anglicane* are to be understood, as they

manifestly shew what it was that he best liked in it, which certainly was not what it's best friends do most approve.

“ Of all the churches (says he) that
 “ have broke the unity, *L'Eglise Anglicane*
 “ is nearest to us, and has retained most of
 “ our rites and ceremonies.”

Hence it appears manifest, that Dr. Courayer considered the church of England merely as a modification of the church of Rome, and its established doctrine as a sort of qualified Popery, fashioned, as nearly as it could be at that time, to the humour of its more enlightened inhabitants. From the following Declaration, a sagacious reader may collect, with certainty, the special

cial instances in which this Popish Doctor thought it culpable, either in the way of excess, or of deficiency, for want of strict conformity to it's prototype; no shape of which can ever be very satisfactory, or very durable in any country that professes an adherence to the simplicity of the Gospel, in this enlightened age; now that the Scriptures are better understood. It seems unnecessary, it might indeed be improper, to enter here minutely into the many particulars to which this directly points attention. At any rate, it seems unfair, and a real evasion of argument, to ascribe all the opinions and sentiments of Dr. Courayer which do not quadrate in length and breadth with the established standard of our national religion;

gion, to the remaining ill-influence of his early prejudices. Such an allegation may obviously be retorted on the Protestant who makes use of it, and certainly proves nothing, on the one side, or on the other.

In fundry such notions and sentiments, in his Unitarian principles especially, in which he is so explicit and scriptural, Dr. Courayer assuredly was not educated; his earliest prejudices unquestionably must have lain against him. He expressly rests the truth of them on the Gospel, and takes the only ground to which a Protestant cannot object, without renouncing all claim to his denomination.

The

The very notions that favour most of Popery, and discover his adherence to it, P. Courayer, far enough from early prejudices, states as the result of reasonings that deserve very serious consideration; the rather as some of them, both in the way of objection to Protestantism, and in defence of Popery, are apparently unanswerable, in strict consistency with the present articles, and forms, of the established English church.

If this opinion of various passages in the following Declaration be well founded, and so it appears to the writer, it is amply sufficient to justify all that has been said in

the three preceding paragraphs, and more than he thinks proper to say here.

The publick undoubtedly is much obliged to the very respectable Dignitary of the church of England who has favoured them with the original of the following Declaration, and who was induced to the publication, by a liberality of sentiment, and upright views of usefulness, that do him great honour, and have distinguished him through the course of his public life. As this gentleman seems very desirous it should be known to the publick, that he has no concern in the following translation; the translator takes this earliest opportunity to meet his wishes, and second his

his advertisement, by declaring, with the utmost sincerity, that, to the best of his knowledge, he never saw the editor of the original, nor ever had any correspondence with him, on this, or any other occasion.

The Declaration itself, manifestly drawn up with an attention that seems to imply earnestness in the deceased Princess, at whose request, and for whose use it was probably first penned, is certainly very honourable to the character of her late Royal Highness, and corroborates the glorious testimony borne to her as a Christian, by the person in the kingdom best qualified to give it *.

* In a dedication to her Royal Highness, of a treatise "On the Lord's Supper," by her Chaplain.

With

With this Princess, and her sister Caroline, it was a rule with P. Courayer, when in London, to spend always one evening in the week. Their Royal Father was often, it is said, of their party, which must have been equally instructive and entertaining, for the Doctor was a chearful man, and a lover, and promoter of innocent mirth.

In this little circle, contrary to the usual custom of Courts, P. Courayer was probably most open and communicative. Supposing, no doubt, that it best became his situation and circumstances in this country, he generally practised more reserve on religious subjects, than appeared to have been natural to him; studiously declining in com-

mon conversation, the free communication of his thoughts on every topic that led to controversy.

In this respect, however, he does not appear to have been more scrupulous, than was fully justifiable: for in his French publications, he had disclosed his sentiments sufficiently to scholars, and such as thought; and as for those who do not think, any revelation of them, afterwards, or now, could not be of much consequence.

The Doctor had unquestionably a love and reverence for truth, that did not permit him to disguise, or conceal his sentiments; but according to the concurring
testi-

testimonies of several very credible witnesses, who knew him well, and were very much in his company, he had likewise a considerable degree of natural timidity, which dictated to him a cautiousness of conversation, commendable in points, where it is not impossible that we may be deceived. It did not however exceed the due bounds of circumspection, and so far as the present writer has heard, P. Courayer was never suspected in the least, either of simulation, or dissimulation.

That almost transparent veil which he wore when alive, he wished, it seems, to be rent at his death, by the publication of the following Declaration, apparently
drawn

drawn up for the satisfaction of a religious Princess, but ultimately designed, as the Editor of the original seems to have justly thought, for his last legacy to Christians. It has hitherto lain deposited in honourable hands, preserved as a precious jewel, and is now given, as is well attested by the good character of the immediate donor, inviolate, and genuine; nor has it, to the best of the translator's knowledge, been any way injured in its translation.

Many years before this, probably the worthy Editor of the original Declaration, perhaps several of Dr. Courayer's most intimate friends, and certainly some penetrating

trating scholars who read his writings with attention, were well acquainted with this Doctor's notions and sentiments, and well apprized of their importance and consequences. The following passage from a letter of Mr. Jeremiah Markland to Mr. Bowyer, dated Sept. 29, 1746, is quoted in proof of these assertions, and proves, at least, some of them.

“ Mr. Clarke has given me P. Courayer’s Translation of the History of the Council of Trent *, with whose preface I am so greatly pleased (having just read it), that if he be no more a Papist in other tenets, than he is in those he

* This copy of Courayer’s book was given to Mr. Clarke by Bp. Hare.

“ men-

" mentions, (which are many, and of the
 " most distinguished class); I dare say,
 " there are very few, who are not as good
 " Catholics as he is. If you have not read
 " it, you have a great pleasure to come."

This part of a letter from a learned,
 acute, and amiable man, to his worthy
 friend, who was likewise a polite and accom-
 plished scholar, is penned point blank, as
 if he had *just read* the following Declara-
 tion; on the perusal of which, many must
 be led into the same, or similar sentiments
 of Dr. Courayer's Popery. This being
 the probability, it may not be improper to
 explain a little, on the notions which such
 sentiments apparently presuppose, and on

the consequences to which they seem to go.

P. Courayer's Popery, whatever may be thought of it, was not a mere, visionary idea. In reality, he retained so much Popery, it may be to the last of his life, as kept him in the Roman Catholic communion, which he never formally renounced; and from which it does not certainly appear that he was ever actually excommunicated. It is very certain, that long after his coming here, even in the year 1763, he was, at least intentionally, re-invited to the country from which he came on the point of excommunication.

This

This is vouched as a fact, on the personal information of a gentleman of eminent knowledge, and unquestionable veracity. The writer is not left at liberty to mention the name of his informer ; but he is the very person who brought a message to P. Courayer, from the Superior of his order at St. Genevieve, to the following purpose, and given so far as the writer can remember, in the very words of the Protestant messenger, who was that Superior's relation.

“ About the end of 1763, I had it
 “ in charge, from the Superior of his
 “ order at St. Genevieve, who was my
 “ relation, to call on Dr. Courayer, and to

“ assure him, that all his enemies were then
 “ dead, and that, if he would resume his
 “ former station, he would be received with
 “ open arms, without recantation, or any
 “ submission whatsoever.” On my learn-
 ed and worthy informer’s return to Lon-
 don, P. Courayer was at Windsor, where
 he continued for some time; and it so hap-
 pened, that the gentleman here referred to,
 never delivered this message, nor it is
 affirmed from his own knowledge, that the
 same, or any similar message was ever deliver-
 ed to the Doctor, by any other messenger.

The attentive reader need not be told
 here, that this friendly, unequivocal in-
 vitation from the Superior of P. Courayer’s
 order

order at St. Genevieve, was long posterior to the Doctor's publication, mentioned in Mr. Markland's letter. His *French* translation of F. PAUL's "History of the Council of Trent" was published in 1736; and consequently, Mr. Markland's letter to Mr. Clarke, is dated ten years after the appearance of the *Preface* to which it alludes, though written just after reading it.

P. Courayer's smooth-tongued Popery, speaks very plausibly, shews all innocence, and appears almost worthy of acceptance. The Doctor had doubtless a right to make the best of it, and to retain it, if he was still captivated with its charms. To justify his choice, he could do no less than

divest it, as much as possible, of its malignity, and its absurdity. Whilst it is left free to fancy, much good may it do those who like it.

But still, even in this apparently innocuous representation, it might be a dangerous inmate in a Protestant family. For all that is said here in its favour, it ought not to be trusted, as it looks so like the meagre chilled snake in the fable, that, after an hospitable reception, quickly glistened, and got strength enough, to be very mischievous to its charitable, and tender-hearted recipients.

In

In all the insidiousness of seeming simplicity, with the most artful concealment of art; **POPERY** at first, in her great deceitfulness, under the form of a plain, harmless-looking, good-like creature, with a beseeching face, and a few rags of Scripture, tattered on purpose to cover her nakedness, implored, and obtained admission into the Christian community, where she was soon cloathed in gorgeous rayment, and presently polluted, and ravaged Christendom with her abominations.

Fronti nulla fides——

—— turpiter atrum

Definat in piscem, mulier formosa superne.

Learned

Baseless and fanciful as the fabric of a vision, is every thing under the name or notion of Christianity, supported merely by any other authority, than that of the **GOSPEL.**

Learned or unlearned, a Christian can find no certitude, but in the Scriptures themselves; and he doubtless takes the safest and easiest, the wisest and best course, who adheres strictly to the Gospel only, for his instruction in the doctrine, and duty, the discipline and decencies, of the Christian life. The idea of Protestantism is as simple, as that of Popery is complex. But in justice we must be observed, that

Popish

Popish principles and practices, are not confined merely to the Pope's dominions, or to the countries, where the Roman Catholic is the established religion—

*Iliacos intra muros gravatur et extra *.*

This is not the place, however, to enter into particular explanations on Popery or Protestantism, or to detail the principles from which they originate, or in which they terminate respectively. But some short remarks on Mr. Markland's letter, are expressly to the purpose of this account.

It is not so easy, nor is it necessary, to state with precision the idea of Popery, on

* *Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.*

which his communication to his friend proceeds. It is obvious, that what he writes to Mr. Clarke of Popery and Papists, does not go on the most common and confined acceptation of these words, as signifying merely the religion of the church of Rome, and the adherents to that religion. It is proper to observe here, that a Christian must carefully keep in mind, this essential distinction between Popery, and Papists, no abomination of the one, can justify any dislike to the other; and Protestants change fides with Papists, the instant they molest them, or even think of them without charity.

Mr.

Mr. Markland, who was not an unintelligent, a rash, or an uncharitable man, expressly says, speaking apparently of scholars, and in his own communion, that there were few who were not as good Catholics as P. Courayer; nor does he by any means exclude himself, a well-informed Protestant layman, from this number.

It follows then from this, that Mr. Markland believed there were Protestants as well qualified in point of Popery, to fill Dr. Courayer's station in the church of Rome, as the Doctor himself was, who notwithstanding, retained it seems, enough of Popery to have been received with welcome
to

to his former rank in that communion; and *vice versa*, with all the Popery that P. Courayer retained, he might have been, in Mr. Markland's opinion, preferred not improperly, in the Protestant establishment of this country; and it is said indeed, I know not how truly, that P. Courayer was offered, and refused preferment, a bishopric, as I have heard, in the church of England. Certainly, as Dr. Clarke said of Abp. Wake, on his promotion to the See of Canterbury, P. Courayer with all his moderation, was "priest enough for the place." This appears from some very acrimonious passages, in P. Courayer's "Oration at Oxford *."

* See *Oratio habita in Tb. Sheld.* 1733, 4to. p. 5 and 6.

Mr. Markland, as a Protestant, admitted no doubt, that the services of Protestant reformers were meritorious, and their memories venerable ; but he seems to have thought, as P. Courayer certainly did, that our Reformers went rather too far in the demolition of Popery.

There are many puzzling appearances in the conduct of Protestants, that much favour this strange opinion, which it is certainly impossible to support, upon Protestant principles. It may be more general than the writer is aware ; but it cannot for that, be more just. If the
quality

quality of it be all the same, it seems unaccountable, to regret the quantity of Popery removed, while we suffer so much from the portion of it still left, and, to our reproach as Protestants, retained so religiously.

Who sees not abundant woeful remnants of Popery in this country, both within and without its religious establishments, that lamentably corrupt the sources of public instruction, miserably aggrieve Christian teachers, and visibly obstruct their ministry, and marr its USEFULNESS, which certainly would supersede the necessity of all other arguments for its validity? Can it be, that
we

we are too much reformed from Popery, in principle, or in practice, while there are still doctrines in the Gospel, that cannot be clearly found in the articles of our churches; and articles in our churches that cannot be clearly found in the Gospel?

Where can be the ground for this opinion, when there are still, unscriptural modes of faith and worship, arbitrarily enjoined on Christians, by acts of Parliament too, fenced with penal laws, disgraceful to our statute-book, and at utter variance, with Protestant principles, and humanity?

——— *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis,*

Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

P. Courayer, it is said, was particularly solicitous, that the following Declaration should not be made public till after his death *. Every liberal-minded man, much more if a judicious and consistent Protestant, must feel shame for him, and concern, on the discovery of the Doctor's motive for this request. Certainly it was not owing to any scrupulosity about the publication of his Popish sentiments, or from any apprehension of inconvenience to himself from an avowed declaration of them. The Doctor was a professed Papist, a con-

* See Advertisement of the Editor of the Original Declaration, p. 2.

stant attendant on their worship, and disposed, as was well known, to have entered farther into communion with them, than they, it is said, were inclined to permit.

The publication now discloses the true motive of his solicitude on this head, of which nothing but constitutional cowardice and the Frenchman's advanced age, could excuse or palliate the pusillanimity. The Doctor was obviously afraid of the obloquy and censure, that he might bring upon himself in a free and Protestant country, by disclosing not his Popish, but his scriptural opinions on Protestant principles. The silly request, and its fillier motives, are perfectly well understood, when we dis-

cover in his Declaration, his Unitarian tenets in all their latitude and vigour, and read there, **THE UNITY OF GOD IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL, AND EVERY THING THAT ENCROACHES ON THIS TRUTH IS DANGEROUS**.*

A Protestant, a mere Briton of whatever religion, or of no religion, can ill find in his heart, any thing a-kin to the mean spiritedness, that could restrain a sincere believer in a doctrine of this magnitude and importance, from declaring his belief of it, in the most public and fearless manner.

* "*L' Unité de Dieu est le fondement de l' Evangile ;*
" Et tout ce qui peut donner atteinte a cette vérité est dan-
" gereux." DECLARATION, Paragraph 6.

Was the *testimony that every man owes to Truth*, not due from Dr. Courayer, till after his death? Why lock up till he was buried, a *public DECLARATION*, to which he says he was *urged by his conscience*? It was ungenerous and unjust to a country, that honoured him for his conscientiousness, and pensioned him for his religious sincerity.

Conscientiousness has certainly as little to fear here, as in any other country in Christendom; nevertheless it is devoutly to be wished for, that those who have it most in their power, would still do something more, to make the reformation from Popery less imperfect; to vindicate
e 3 them-

themselves, or Protestant principles, into greater consistency; and to enlarge the national churches, by a more extensive comprehension of Protestants.

Holy orders are now given to disbanded soldiers, &c. who have had no previous education for such employments, and are ill qualified for the proper discharge of them. But the education and ordination of religious teachers, now too little attended to, being placed in proper hands, and conducted under proper regulations, it is not easy to conceive, what great injury a Christian community could feel very extensively, that might not be prevented or remedied effectually, though their teachers, being good scholars and good men, were left at entire liberty to explain

plain the Gospel in its utmost simplicity, according to the conceptions of it, on which they risked their own salvation.

It seems as if there were Christians who coolly thought, that Christ's flock ought to be kept always as it was at first, a *little flock*. But as certainly as Christianity is from God, the church that adheres most closely to the simplicity of the Gospel, must be the purest, the wisest, and the most permanent. It may have been the intention of Providence, that it should wrestle with opposition, and thrive like our oak, which roots deeper, and grows better for our stormy winds; that this world should not be its friend, or this world's laws; and that

that its extent should long remain not clearly discernible, reaching always far beyond its communion, and visibility; but certainly, when faith has wrought patience, and patience its perfect work, like Aaron's rod, it must swallow up every other, and prevail in the end, against the learning of Egypt, and all the left-handed wisdom of the world.

Mean while the best Christians, and the more for their acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, will be most sensible of, and most thankful for, the great blessings after all, which this country affords to its subjects, of holding faith in a good conscience, and living peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.

What

What stronger, or even equal inducements, can men and Christians have to publick spirit, in any kingdom upon earth, than they have here? Free from molestation, and liable to no dangers that need disquiet for a moment the soul of a Christian, or intimidate the spirit of a man, we may all live here, like primitive Christians, the best possible lives in the best possible state of Christianity, bearing our honest testimonies to the truth, and regulating our religious conduct accordingly.

P. Courayer, whether Papist, or Protestant, was by all accounts a Christian of the true breed, who retained to the last of
a long

a long life, the regard and esteem of all good men. The current of testimonies, runs strong, and clear, in favour of his character ; he was well known, and generally believed to be true, and a friend to truth. His conversation, it is said, was peculiarly edifying and pleasing, enlivened with much variety of literary and historical anecdotes ; his manners were pure, unsuspicious, and unsuspected ; and with all his politure, he never lost his sterling simplicity.

Many books which he published in the French language, and some remains written in the Latin tongue, testify for his understanding, learning, and taste. The following is the best list, the writer of this account can give at present, and it may be imperfect.

1. *Traite*

1. *Traite de Poeme Epique.* 2, 3, 4, 5. The Dissertation, the Defence of it, the *Relation Apologetique & Historique*, and a Supplement to the two last works, of which mention has been made already in the preceding part of this account. The Dissertation was first printed with the approbation of the Licenſer, that accompanies that edition, which, though it bears the name of Bruffels on the title-page, came really from the preſs at Nancy. 6. *Lettre à my Lord Percival, au ſujet de la nouvelle accusation de faux qui lui eſt intentée, par le P. Harduin.* 7. *Lettre à M. L'Abbé Girardin.* 8. *Lettre à M. le Cardinal Noailles.* The curious may ſee a tranſlation of this letter into Engliſh, in “The Historical Register

Register for the year 1729," N° LIII, p. 40.

9. *Oratio habita in Theatro Sheldoniano apud Oxonienses à P. F. Courayer, S. T. P. Quint.*

Id. Julij MDCCXXXIII. 4to. 9 pages,

10. A French translation of F. Paul's History of the Council of Trent, with notes critical, historical, and theological, 1736.

Lond. 2 vols. *in folio*; printed at Amst. in the same year in 2 vols. 4to, and at Tre-

voux, under the title of Amst. in 3 vols.

in 4to. with a defence of the translation,

by the Author of it. 11. The History of

the Reformation, by Sleidan, translated

from the Latin, 1767, 3 vols. in 4to.

This translation is likewise accompanied

with copious notes, wherein the Author

discusses interesting facts. 12. His Latin

letter

letter to the University of Oxford has been mentioned already; and he was the Author, it is said, of sundry articles in the Journal intituled, "*L'Europe Scavante*."

P. Courayer's sight was very bad for many years, and for the two or three last of his life he was entirely blind. In his lifetime, it may be, about twenty years before he died, he gave his books to Archbishop Tenison's Library at St. Martin's.

P. Courayer died at his lodgings in Spring-gardens, after an illness, it is said, of two days, on the 17th of October, 1776, at the very advanced age of ninety-five; and was buried, at his own desire, in the cloister

cloister of Westminster-abbey, by Dr. Bell, then chaplain to the Princess Amelia, to whom that Princess left as a legacy, the original Declaration, in the French language, of which the following translation [wherein the Editor of the original is no way concerned] is submitted to the candour, and recommended to the serious consideration of the Reader.

Dr. Courayer's will, dated Feb. 3, 1774, was proved at Doctors Commons, Oct. 24, 1776. He left 500l. to St. Martin's parish, to the Library of which, he had many years before given all his books. He bequeathed 200l. to the parish of St. Margaret in Westminster, a handsome sum
of

of money to the poor of Vernon in Normandy, where he was born, and many legacies to his friends in England. The residue of his estate was left to two nephews of his name, at Vernon.

The friend from whom I derive much of the information given in this account, refers to a publication in 2 vols. small 8vo, 1777, by the Rev. W. Jones, B. A. then Rector of Pluckley in Kent, and afterwards of Paston in Northamptonshire, author of *Physiological Disquisitions*, &c. 1781, and other learned works. The title of the publication referred to is, "Observations in a Journey to Paris;" and I have still to add, that the account of
Dr.

Dr. Courayer, inserted there, and here made use of, was communicated by James Smyth, Esq; of Upper Grosvenor-street.

There is, it seems, a small oval portrait of Dr. Courayer, engraved by Mrs. Elizabeth B. Gullston, from a painting by Hamilton, with this inscription, "Pierre François Courayer, who was banished France, for writing in defence of English Ordination. He was born at Rouen, Nov. 17, 1681, and is still living. Published June 1, 1774."

The writer, or writers, of the article COURAYER P. F. in the French Dictionary, mentioned at the beginning of this account, likewise make Rouen, the place of the

the Doctor's nativity, and date his birth in the same year.

Bishop Atterbury had a very fine picture of P. Courayer, which his Lordship made the *Lieutenant de Police* take notice of, when he came to him with an unpleasant message from the French King, and the Cardinal De Noailles, as has been before narrated. That identical picture is now in the Bodleian Library, having been left by the Bishop's will, to the University of Oxford. It is hardly necessary to add, that it represented P. F. Courayer in the prim and vigour of his life.

In the cloister of Westminster Abbey,
directly over the effigies of Abbot Vitalis,
f there

there is an inscription meant to do justice and honour to Dr. Courayer's memory, the production of an ingenious Fellow of Brazen Nose College, the late Mr. Kynaston. That inscription was placed upon the monument too hastily, before the author's requested revival. A more accurate copy of it, Mr. Kynaston gave afterwards to his friend Mr. Nichols, to whom the publick is indebted for the "Anecdotes of Bowyer." With a faithful transcript from it, as published in that work, this account, very hastily drawn up, concludes.

H. S. E.

[lxxxiii]

H. S. E.

Annis morumque integritate juxta reverendus

PETRUS FRANCISCUS COURAYER,

Cœnobii de *Sanctâ Genovevâ* dicti

Apud Urbem *Lutetiam Parisiorum*

Regularis olim Canonicus.

Vir, si quis alius,

De Ecclesiâ atque Politia Anglicanâ

Animo pariter ac scriptis,

Optimè meritis.

Quippe qui Episcopatum jus Administrationum

Jamdiù a Pontificiis acerrime impugnatum

Huic eidem Ecclesiæ

Et Gallus ipse, & pontificius,

Inviçtâ argumentorum vi, asseruit & vindicavit :

Quique adeò, ob id vindicandum

Pulsus jam patria, profugus,

Omnibusque demum exutus fortunis,

Hac in urbe quærebat asylum, et inveniebat ;

Ibique per annos prope quinquaginta

[lxxxiv]

Honestæ mentis otio egregius fruebatur exul,
Bonorum omnium deliciæ vivus,
Moriens commune desiderium.

Obiit quintâ decimâ die *Octobris*
Anno post natum Christum MDCCLXXVI.

Post se natum xcv.

Huic tali tantoque Viro,
Marmor hoc, amoris sui monumentum,
Posuere Amici,

Cui famam marmore perenniore peperit,
Defensa veritas, refutatus error.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

BY THE

EDITOR OF THE FRENCH EDITION.

TO convince the reader that the following declaration, now happily brought to light, is really the work of the celebrated man whose name it bears; it is sufficient to say, that the MS. was given by M. Le Courayer himself to the deceased Princess AMELIA, who had a great esteem for the Author, and that her Royal Highness left it by legacy to me.

B

When

When M. Le Courayer put his MS. into the hands of the Princess, he particularly requested, that it might not be permitted to appear till he himself was no longer in a condition to apprehend the consequences of the various reflections which it might give birth to, with respect to the Author. This period has long since passed; and as not only the declaration itself, but likewise the first and last paragraphs of it, are strong proofs that it was written with a view to be one day published, I should not shew that regard to the Author, which is due to his merit, if, by suppressing his work, I acted in direct contradiction to his own intention.

The

The last sentiments of a writer of Mr. Le Courayer's celebrity, placed in so particular a situation, are surely, in themselves, sufficient to excite the curiosity of the learned, and of every person who has any serious regard for religion.

As he never formally renounced the Roman Catholic communion, and never united himself with the body of Protestants, though he frequently attended divine worship in the English churches, doubts may be entertained about his way of thinking, which he kept undisclosed. The remarkable declaration now submitted to the public, will not only manifest his sentiments in the clearest light possible, but it

will shew likewise, much to his honour, that at an age, when he was relieved from all anxiety about this world, and daily occupied with the thoughts of another, he persevered in the laudable desire of making the rectitude of his intentions notorious, and of contributing to the progress of religion, and the augmentation of its influence.

It has often been a practice with the members of the Roman Church, to give out, and to try to make it be believed, that those who have abandoned them have always returned into their bosom before they died, and acknowledged in their hearts

hearts the justice of their pretensions, and the truth of their doctrine. But this declaration of M. Le Courayer furnishes an incontestible proof of the falsity of their allegation. We see here an Author distinguished by his science and abilities, who, at a time of life when his intellectual faculties were in all their vigour, was obliged, on account of his writings, to abandon his country, and the honourable place he filled in the Roman church, and was at last, when on the very point of leaving this world, far advanced in years *, voluntarily led to declare his sentiments.

* M. Le Courayer was aged nearly 47, when he quitted France in 1728. He was then a regular Canon, and senior Librarian of the Abbey of St. Gene-

timents in the most unequivocal and authentic manner. It proves, that he was thoroughly convinced, that the doctrine of the Roman church, in almost every instance in which it differed from that of Protestants, was contrary to truth and the word of God.

Nevertheless, while it has discovered that he had happily got free, almost entirely, from the pernicious influence of the

view at Paris. The prosecutions commenced against him on account of his "Defence of the validity of English Ordinations," obliged him to fly. He died in Oct. 1776, aged 95; so that in March 1767, which is the date of this declaration signed with his own hand, he was about 86.

preju-

prejudices of his education, in respect of the erroneous opinions of the church of Rome, and of its absurd and insupportable institutions, it is likewise visible that he retained an attachment to some of them ; which, considering his knowledge and abilities, can only be ascribed to his very early prejudices. But, on these occasions, as on all others, his moderation and candour are so strongly marked, and the ingenuousness and simplicity of his heart are so amiable, that people of liberal minds, and even those who are not much prejudiced, will read his sentiments with singular pleasure, though different from their own ; and the most unlearned people, and even

those who are *still* under the influence of
 prejudice, may reap some advantage from
 them.

April 14, 1787.

A De-

*A Declaration of my last Sentiments on
the different Doctrines of Religion.*

ON the point of appearing before God,
both to fulfill the duty of sincerity,
and to furnish all, into whose hands this
writing may fall, with a testimony which
every person living owes to truth ; urged
moreover by my conscience, to declare my
thoughts on the doctrines of Christianity,
and the differences which divide Chris-
tian societies ; I proceed to do it with that
sim-

simplicity which becomes integrity in the near view of death.

1. I believe firmly that there is a God. Atheism appears to me a sentiment as pernicious as it is unreasonable. Equally contrary to the light of nature, the purity of manners, and the good of society; it is the interest of the whole world, to proscribe a doctrine founded only on blindness and corruption. It is making too bad an use of liberty and reason, to employ them both in darkening a truth which all nature announces, against which the heart struggles in vain, to abandon itself to its passions with less scruple and remorse.

2. Poly-

2. Polytheism is less dangerous, but it is not more rational, than Atheism; and it is as contrary to reason, to acknowledge several Gods, as it is, not to acknowledge any. This last error makes Atheists, and the first Idolaters. Atheism has but few followers; Idolatry, on the contrary, has overspread the whole face of the earth; the Jews being almost the only people who have preserved themselves from this contagion. Not but they also fell into it from time to time; but it never prevailed among them so generally, as to extinguish entirely the knowledge and the worship of the One God, which they communicated, in the end, to all nations; according to that saying of Jesus Christ, “ that salva-
 “ tion

"tion must come of the Jews." *We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews* *.

3. I believe, therefore, not only that there is a God; but, moreover, that there is but ONE. I detest the error of two principles, maintained by so many ancient heretics; and while I ascribe to God the glory of all good, I believe that I can only have recourse to the will of man, for the discovery of the original of moral evil.

4. Jesus Christ being come into the world to reclaim the Gentiles to the worship of the One God, has deprived the

* John iv. 22.

Jews of the vain confidence they had in mere exterior observances, and given us a more clear and certain knowledge of another life. There is nothing in his doctrine which is not conformable to the most pure light of reason; which is not most advantageous to the welfare of society; and which, by consequence, is not, in the highest degree imaginable, well deserving of our acknowledgement and obedience.

Deists have laboured in vain to obstruct the progress of this doctrine under the pretext of the errors which corrupted it, and of the divisions that have rent Christendom. But it is not to attack it, to combat

bat opinions which are foreign from it, and of which it is independent. This is only to shew, that they know not either the sense, or the spirit of it; and that they wish, perhaps, it was less true and less divine, in order not to be obliged to submit to its laws, which bridle the passions, and hinder the conscience from continuing tranquil in criminality and error.

5. The doctrine of the Unity of God, so true, and so evident, has served for a pretext to many, to try to inspire aversion at Christianity, as if it affected this truth by it's doctrines of the Trinity, and the Incarnation. The writings of some of the fathers, and the wretched philosophy of the

the schools, may, in fact, have given ground to some people to draw such a consequence : but there is nothing in the Gospel which does not tend, on the contrary, to confirm us more and more in the knowledge and worship of One God ; and nothing is less opposite to this truth than the doctrines which are thought to destroy it effectually.

6. Of all the modes of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, I know of none more contrary to the true doctrine of Christianity, than that which supposes in the Deity an existence of three substances distinct, however collateral, however subordinate. It is, in my apprehension, to

re-establish Polytheism, under the pretext of explaining a mystery. The Unity of God, is the foundation of the Gospel; and every thing that may in any way affect this truth is dangerous. As Jesus Christ and his apostles have laboured, on the one hand, to reclaim the Gentiles from the belief and from the worship of many Gods, and have supposed, on the other hand, that the Jews thought soundly in the article of Deity, in which they never distinguished different substances; it seems to me a departure from the simplicity of the Gospel, and a voluntary inclination to corrupt the idea of a clear truth, by singular explications, which it becomes necessary to abuse at least, in order to combat.

7. I believe, therefore, that there is but only *One* God ; that his Spirit is not a substance distinct from HIM ; and that Jesus Christ, to whom divinity was very intimately united, is his Son in virtue of that union. This is all the *Trinity* that I find in the Gospel ; and I cannot conceive that any other *Trinity* can accord with the *Unity* of GOD. I know that many ancient writers have had recourse to the multiplication of substances, to give us an idea of this mystery ; and others have imagined other systems, more philosophical than evangelical, that have less served to clear up this matter than to obscure it. But I distinguish these systems from that of the GOSPEL : and, in as much as I find this

last worthy of respect, it therefore appears to me little essential to adopt notions which often have much obscurity, and sometimes are even involved in contradiction.

The Incarnation has nothing any more contrary to the doctrine of the *Unity* of God, than the Trinity. Accordingly, it is extremely remarkable, that neither Jesus Christ nor his apostles have ever represented to us these mysteries as including incomprehensible things, and which it was impossible to reconcile to reason. God, willing to draw men from their errors and to purify them from their sins, filled Jesus Christ with his wisdom, invested

vested him with his power, communicated to him his authority, and gave him his Spirit *, not by measure, as to the prophets, but united himself so intimately with him, that Jesus Christ appeared in the form of God †; that he was made Lord and Christ ‡; Prince and Saviour ||; that he was filled with wisdom and with grace ¶; that all the fullness of the Godhead resided corporeally in him **; and that he received the glory, the honour, the virtue, the strength, and the blessing, of his Father ††; WHO, by the participation which

* Jo. III. 34.

† Phil. II. 6.

‡ Acts II. 36.

|| Acts V. 31.

¶ Luke II. 40.

** Coloss. II. 9.

†† Apoc. V. 12.

he gave him of his power and authority, made him enter, at the same time, into a participation of his glory, in such a manner, that he who honours the Son honours the Father who sent him *. Thus God, referring always every thing to himself, and not terminating in Jesus Christ, who is no otherwise regarded than as the organ and the instrument of the mercy of his Father, is always God *alone*, who is the object of our adorations; and there is nothing that shocks us in conceiving, that He can communicate himself to a man as fully, and as intimately, as he judges it necessary for his own glory, and for the salvation of mankind.

* Jo. V. 23.

9. This is the explication of that intimate union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ, which, perfectly simple as it is, has so much divided all Christendom. From a willingness to find, in this intimate union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ, all that we experience in the union of the body and the soul, we have been thrown into embarrassments and contradictions, which it is impossible either to explain or to conciliate. We talk of hypostases, of personalities, of idioms, and of every thing that a dark philosophy could imagine, to render things credible, of which it was unable to give us any notion. Some have made a ridiculous mixture of the divinity with the humanity. Others, in

discriminating too nicely the difference, have seemed to place Jesus Christ only in the rank of ordinary prophets. Hence the Nestorianism, the Eutycheism, the Apollinarism, and the Monothelisme, which have excited such fatal schisms in the church, and which have, perhaps, as much favoured the progress of Mahometanism in the East, as the ignorance of these nations, and the victorious arms of the Saracens.

10. To avoid these excesses, we must abide in the simplicity of the Gospel, and content ourselves with acknowledging, that God, to bring the world back to his knowledge, and to his worship, gave birth to Jesus Christ in a miraculous manner, and
united

united HIMSELF to him in a way the most close and intimate, so that it might be said, that Jesus Christ was in God *, and God in him; that all that appertained to the Father † was in the disposition of the Son, by the communication which the Father had given him of His power; that he had resigned all judgement to him ‡; that, as the Father could raise the dead to life, the Son could do so also §: that the doctrine of Jesus Christ was not his own, but that of his Father who sent him ||; that he was only the same thing with him ¶; that it was the Father who abode in him, and who

* Jo. X. 38. † Jo. XVII. 7. 10. ‡ Jo. V. 22.

§ Jo. V. 21. || Jo. VII. 16. ¶ Jo. X. 30.

did all his works *; in one word, that he was the Son of God †, because that God, on sending him into the world, had sanctified him to such a degree, that he who saw him ‡, saw his Father, and that he who believed in him, believed also in God.

11. When one has once acknowledged the truth and the holiness of the Gospel, all this doctrine concerning the person of Jesus Christ appears to me so simple, that I cannot conceive how it was possible to corrupt it by so many explications, which are good for nothing, but to make Christianity appear less reasonable, and full of

* Jo. XIV. 10. † Jo. X. 36. ‡ Jo. XI. 44, 45.

contradictions. In consequence of a continual desire to find new mysteries, an infinitude of imaginations have been consecrated; and it is still more lamentable, that these imaginations are become a part of religion, by the authority of some, and by the acquiescence of others; so that a man passes for an unbeliever, or an irreligious person, if he does not subscribe to the predominant system, and if he happens to have too much understanding to submit to received prejudices, or too much fortitude to be overawed by violence.

12. It is not so much the person of Jesus Christ, as his doctrine, that is the object of
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the Christian religion ; and though we ought to honour the Son as we honour the Father, because he had HIS mission, and was cloathed with HIS authority, it is, however, to GOD *only* that Jesus Christ reclaims our attention ; and he assumes no other consequence to recommend himself to the Jews, than as having been sanctified by his Father, to come and announce HIS doctrine, and to instruct us in truths unknown to the Gentiles, and very much altered by the Jews.

13. Among the number of these truths is the clearest declaration made in the Gospel, of the immortality of the soul,

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and

and of the certainty of another life*: but although there is nothing more certain, or more conformable to reason, than this doctrine, there is nothing more frivolous than the disputes which have been agitated concerning the state of this other life. Christianity, and reason itself, permits us not to entertain any doubt on the continuation of the existence of our soul after the dissolution of our body †. There is not at least any argument from the destruction of the one, to that of the other; and the justice of God seems to exact, that as probity, virtue, and religion, are rather exposed here to contempt, and to sufferings, than

* Jo. V. 23.

† 2 Tim. I. 10.

to prosperities and rewards, they should find after death the happiness that has been promised to them ; and that impiety and criminality should receive the chastisement they deserve : but as to what may be the degree, nature, and proportion of them, that is not revealed to us, and it is what reason cannot discover. It is therefore in vain that we dispute ; and all the opinions that have been advanced on this point, are so many thoughts thrown out at a venture, which there is just as good ground to reject as to advance. All, therefore, that is said of a purgatory and its pains, of the place, and different sorts of punishment in hell, and even of the nature of our beatitude and of our recompensations, is only founded on metaphorical

phorical expressions, which it is difficult to take literally, and in their full extent, and which leave us, after all, in profound ignorance of the nature of the happiness, and of the misery, of the other life. All that is certain on this head is, that assuredly virtue shall be recompensed, and vice punished; that nothing corrupt shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that the immortality of our souls, and their invariability, leaving no farther scope for merit or for demerit, there is reason to believe, that recompence, as well as punishment, will have no other term than that of the mercy of God, and of his justice. God himself can, no doubt, give to his justice the bounds that He judges proper; but as He
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has not revealed this, it is dangerous to assume confidence in his clemency, on a foundation so feeble as that of our conjectures; and to abandon ourselves foolishly to criminality, on the hope of an indulgence, whereof God has given us no certainty.

14. In treating as frivolous the disputes which concern the state of the other life, I pretend not to extend this epithet of *frivolity* to the doctrine of the resurrection of bodies. This truth is too clearly revealed, and besides too conformable to reason and to justice, for us to be permitted to have the least doubt about it. It is true, that the manner is to us incomprehensible.

prehensible, and that all our conjectures on this point are equally obscure and uncertain: but difficulties in things of this nature, and our inability to resolve them, prove only the narrowness of our knowledge, without affecting in the least the truths themselves. Faith extends only to the substance of the thing; but for the manner, as it has not been revealed to us, and as our reason furnishes us with no means of discovering it, every person is at liberty to adopt what appears to him most probable; and we cannot censure others for temerity, without becoming guilty ourselves of the same fault whereof we accuse them; for neither can we have any more light to

contradict

contradict them, than they can have to defend the conjectures they produce.

15. The same obscurity reigns in many other considerable points. It is now about thirteen centuries that Christians have been disputing with one another on the subjects of Liberty, of Predestination, and of Grace; and, in all appearance, their disputes of this kind may continue till the end of the world, without the possibility of clearing up these dark points any more than they have done hitherto, or of piercing through the obscurities in which they are enveloped. I avow, in this respect, my own ignorance, and my incapacity. I feel that I am free, and my reason accords with what I feel;
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since liberty cannot be denied without destroying all merit and demerit, and without annihilating all notion of virtue and of vice, of recompense and of chastisement; which tends to nothing less than the subversion of all religion, and the introduction of confusion into all society. I feel also that I have need of grace both to know good, and to love and to practise it; and that without this succour my liberty is impotent, not from defect of power, but for want of aid. But how to reconcile my liberty with the necessity of this succour, is that which passes my understanding.

16. I can as little explain how a predestination, or even the mere prescience of

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God,

God, with regard to future contingencies, accords with the idea of liberty. The Socinians have cut this knot, by denying such a predestination or prescience; and, I acknowledge, that it is the only method that reason offers for solving this difficulty. But Scripture furnishes so many proofs of the knowledge that God has of futurity; and reason seconds so well on this head the light of revelation, that it seems to me impossible to deny that God is possessed of this sort of knowledge, without shocking the ideas we have of the perfections of the Supreme Being. What then remains to be done, but humbly to avow our ignorance on this subject, but to do, on our part, all that is in our power with the succours
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of grace, to work out our salvation by observing the commandments of God ; but to act with the same confidence as if all depended on ourselves, and with the same humility as if all depended upon God ? What better can we do than refer, with tranquillity, the clearing up of all these difficulties, to the time when God shall abundantly communicate his light, to those whom he shall judge worthy of being partakers in the happiness he has destined to those who prepare themselves for it, by the practice of his laws, and innocency of life ? All our knowledge on enquiries on this head, terminates in such conclusions ; and all my studies and meditations, have not hitherto pro-

Cured me more light, or put me into a condition to resolve the difficulties which are found in reconciling truths that seem apparently opposite to each other.

17. The question concerning the origin of evil has almost as much difficulty as the preceding. With regard to moral evil, indeed, it is not difficult to assign the cause. The moment that we suppose man a free agent, we must acknowledge that he has the power of practising virtue, or of abandoning himself to vice : and it is impossible to suppose him capable of merit, or demerit, without granting him the faculty of doing good or evil. There is, therefore, no necessity to search for the origin of
moral

moral evil any where else, but in the use that man makes of his liberty.

With regard to physical evil, it is not altogether the same. *St. Augustine*, who had taught, that *under a just judge no person could be miserable without deserving it*, thought he could no otherwise justify the multitude of human miseries to which we are subject, but by supposing an anterior demerit which had drawn them upon us, and he had recourse to original sin, to justify in this point, the conduct of Providence. But, in this way, he tried to excuse apparent, by real injustice, infinitely more opposite to the notions of goodness, of equity, of holiness and of wisdom, with

which we are furnished from the idea of God : for it would be less unworthy of HIM to render us all necessarily culpable, without our will having any part in the criminality imputed to us, than to render us miserable without our having deserved to be so. Besides, the example of animals subject to the same corporal miseries, whom we cannot accuse of having brought them upon themselves by sin, weakens, and even destroys, the arguments which this holy doctor made use of to support his system.

We must, therefore, have recourse to some other reason to vindicate Providence in this particular. With regard to sin-

ners, the thing is not difficult, since they may have deserved, by their iniquities, all the pains with which they can be afflicted : but with regard to the just and the innocent, as well as children, the case is widely different ; and it is impossible to assign a reason for this conduct of God towards them ; but, by regarding their afflictions in the light of trials, and but by considering, that as the happiness or misery of man is not to be estimated by what befalls him in this world, where he is not born to have his felicity, the miseries therefore by which he may be afflicted, become means, in some sort, necessary to make him aspire to something more solid than a temporal happiness, without which he would fall into forgetfulness

of God, and place his repose and his happiness, in things unworthy of his affection and of his hopes.

If we add to this, that man having been created in a state of imperfection, and such as suited the designs of God, that he might merit by his fidelity and obedience, a happiness which he destined for him under the title of merit and recompence; it was not just that he should enter into this life, upon the possession of a felicity, for which, he had been at no pains to bring up the proper faculties. We can see, in some measure, through this, why man was made subject to infirmities, to temptations, to the pains and miseries of this life, from
 . . . which

which he could not have been exempted without a total change, of the nature of his being, and of the end which his Creator proposed in forming him. These, in my opinion, are the most rational conceptions than can be formed on this subject. Not, however, that I believe we can, even in this way, silence all doubts, or resolve all difficulties. There are things which leave us not at this liberty; and all those that depend on an exact knowledge of the nature and attributes of God, and of the ends he proposed in forming man just as he has created him, ought to be placed in this number. We know sufficiently, that He can do nothing unjust. We experience likewise that men are born subject to

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pains and to miseries, even before they seem to have deserved them. We may well assure ourselves, that in all this there is no injustice on the part of God; but, from our want of instruction in HIS views, and in the ends which HE proposes by this conduct, we cannot conciliate these truths of which, however, we are certain, both from our own experience, and what we learn from reason; nor is it possible for us to resolve the difficulties which result from this apparent contradiction. Our ignorance, however, is not a title to accuse God of injustice; and, in a case like this, probable reasons are sufficient to justify HIS providence in default of more certain principles, which are wanting to us, for
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our not knowing enough of the nature of God and of the equity of his views.

18. With the exception of some truths, both speculative and practical, in which mere reason and the light of nature suffice to instruct us, the remainder of those in which it is our duty to believe, come to us from revelation; and this revelation is configned to us is the Scriptures. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us, to endeavour to discern the true Scriptures, from those which are falsely given as genuine. Now we have no other rule for this discrimination, but tradition. If it is uniform, and comes to us from the fountain-head, there would be irreligion and temerity in rejecting

jecting it ; but if it is divided, there is little reason in a disposition to obtrude books, as divine, upon an authority which, in every other case, would not be sufficient to warrant our receiving as certain, facts, concerning which there was similar diversity. The council of Trent ought not, therefore, to have run the hazard of declaring the deuterocanonical or apocryphal books, of the same authority as the canonical, since there was not for them the same concurrence, or the same uniformity of testimonies. For this Council had not received new light concerning these *apocryphal* writings ; and since the Jews, who transmitted them to us, on transmitting them, had apprized us of the discrimination.

nation to be made ; it was sinning against all the canons of criticism, to give to these books an authority which was not granted to them by those from whom we had them, and from whom only we have received our intelligence.

19. With regard to those *books* which a constant tradition has transmitted to us, from hand to hand, as containing truly "The word of God," it is our duty to respect, and receive them, as the rule of our faith, and of our manners, because we ought to regard the DOCTRINES and the PRECEPTS which are contained in them, as coming from the inspiration of God himself ; for it is properly to these two points only, that the

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the inspiration extends. There is no need of inspiration, to report what is seen or heard, or even what is taken from records and from authentic monuments, on which all public faith is founded; and it would be just as unreasonable to refuse our assent to such information, as it would be to reject what we learn from revelation. The most incredulous have no more doubt about the existence of Alexander and Cæsar, than Christians have concerning that of Jesus Christ; although it is not supposed that there was any inspiration in the historians who have given us the history of these two conquerors.

Inspiration adds nothing to the certainty of facts, and does not appear any way necessary to establish them. I even fear whether the having recourse to it in order to procure credit, has not been a motive that has forced the incredulous upon their attempts to shew, with a view of discrediting the contents of Scripture, that we have had recourse to inspiration, only because all other evidence is wanting to give credibility to what is recorded there. Farther, to suppose inspiration for things to which it is not requisite, is to admit of miracles without necessity, and thus to multiply difficulties, and to furnish objections to unbelievers, who reject even necessary miracles. The prophets were certainly inspired,

inspired, because they could not have predicted future things but by inspiration. The Evangelical Doctrine must likewise have been inspired, because the Apostles received it from Jesus Christ, who had it from his Father HIMSELF. But St. John*, without having recourse to inspiration gives us as true the facts which he reports to us, only because he saw and heard them. "What we have seen and heard we testify, "&c †;" and St. Luke does not exact belief to the things which he relates, but because he had taken them from the mouths of those who had seen all from the beginning, "Even as they delivered them

* Jo. vii. 16.

† Jo. i. 1, 3.

"unto

“unto us, which from the beginning were
“eye-witnesses and ministers of the word †.”

If they had believed that inspiration had been necessary to conciliate belief to the facts which they recorded, they would not have hesitated to tell us, that they had derived their information and knowledge from God Himself. But as they appeal to no other vouchers for their truth besides their own testimony, and that of those who had followed and heard Jesus Christ from the beginning, it is evident they had no conception of the inspiration of those kinds of facts, and that they reserved it for the
DOCTRINE.

* Luke i. 2.

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It was this that made St. Paul say, that
 “ All inspired writing is useful to instruct
 “ and to conduct to piety, and to righte-
 “ ousness, that the man of God may be
 “ perfect and prepared for all good * ;”
 insinuating by this, that inspiration had
 been communicated to the Sacred Writers,
 only to enlighten us, and to instruct us in
 the ways of salvation ; and that human
 certitude was sufficient for every thing else.
 I would not, however, be understood from
 this, as if I meant to affirm, that the other
 sacred books were not written by the spirit
 of God. I mean only to insinuate, that
 though the certitude of facts which have

* 2 Tim. iii. 6.

been

been committed to writing without inspiration, be different from that which belongs to inspired writings; when there is found any want, either of exactness, or of memory, this does not weaken in any manner the veracity and the certainty of revelation; and we should not be less criminal if we refused to give the credit to it, due to the Word of God.

20. The most respectable authority to a Christian, in matters of religion, after Scripture, is that of the Church, or of General councils. It is to overturn all the foundations of legitimate society, to refuse to submit to their orders, even though we may not see distinctly their necessity, or

their utility. In points of discipline it is the avowed principle of all the world, that every society has a right to prescribe what appears to it most suitable, and that there is an obligation to submit to this : but in points of doctrine, the case is not quite the same. Jesus Christ has fixed this, and it is not permitted to the church, to add any thing to it, or to retrench any thing : *nihil minuit, nihil addit*, as Vincent de Lerins says. Moreover the mind of man cannot acquiesce but in a known truth, nor can it give its assent if the decision be not clear ; or it really believes nothing by pretending to give consent. In order to believe, there must be a distinct idea of the thing we pretend to believe. If a doctrine

trine be proposed to any person, of which he has no notion, he cannot make it the object of his faith; the object of faith in this case is merely nominal. There is a deception in the idea that is commonly formed of faith; it is supposed that the object of it must be incomprehensible. It seems to me that this is an error, and that all that is simply necessary to constitute an object of *Christian faith* is, that we believe it is not apprehensible by our senses, or that mere reason does not discover it; and that it is only known to us by a revelation of a divine authority. It is not therefore the incomprehensibility of any thing which makes it an object of faith; since there are things in nature equally incomprehensible;

but it is the divine authority on which we believe it, notwithstanding that our reason, or our senses, procure us no knowledge of it.

22. We cannot wander by submitting to faith when it is founded on the word of God, which is infallible. But the infallibility that is ascribed to the church, is not established on a foundation so solid as that on which it is acknowledged that Scripture rests. Inasmuch as the church in her decisions conforms herself to the word of God, and to apostolic doctrines, she can only pretend to her infallibility, not in virtue of her judgement, but in consequence of this conformity. But if

the decisions of the church go beyond this rule, they cannot have the same certainty, because they are no longer regulated by the same authority, which only, can assure them of the same infallibility. Although in the Christian society there be no authority superior to her own to reform her judgements, this is not a reason for believing her to be absolutely infallible, since a superior tribunal has nothing in respect of fallibility to distinguish it from inferior tribunals, but the impossibility of having its decisions superseded, because there is not any *paramount* authority that has the right to reform them, though they may stand in need of reformation. It is therefore rather an indefectibility than an in-

fallibility that ought to be recognized in the church, where, although errors may sometimes insinuate themselves, it is sufficient that she preserves always the fundamental truths, which are the essence of Christianity, and the practice of the duties of morality, to assure the salvation of those who persevere in being her members.

22. The Pope is still less infallible than the Church. There is nothing that distinguishes him from other bishops but the pre-eminence of his see, and a more extensive jurisdiction, which has nothing in common with infallibility. It is in him an abusive pretension, to affect absolutely to subject to himself all the particular churches,

churches, and to believe that he can, at his pleasure, prescribe to them other doctrines than those which were taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles, and to impose upon them arbitrary laws, so far as in cases of their non-observance of them, to assume an authority to himself of cutting them off, without any ceremony, from the communion of the rest of the church. He may, in truth, refuse to communicate with those whom he believes to be in error, or to want the submission due to lawful rules. But this suspension of communion does not exclude them from the body of the church itself; and, if it be he who separates from them without reason, then it is he who is guilty of the schism, and not they;

they; for, though he be the head of the Christian churches, we are not obliged to obey him, but in so far as he abides by truth and righteousness, and does not, for things indifferent, break the bonds of unity and peace.

28. Episcopal government is so ancient in the church, that we have no room to believe, but that it came from Jesus Christ himself. The fathers of the second century of the church give us it as an evangelical establishment, and leave us no suspicion that it was, in their time, any thing new. The confusion of the names of Bishop and Presbyter, in early times, is not a sufficient prejudice against the antiquity

quity of this institution. There has been too much of hardyhood and temerity in most of the modern sectaries, who have chosen to change, without necessity, a government founded on a succession so constant. It might have been possible, to have restrained an authority either too extensive or usurped, or granted, at times, imprudently to Bishops, so as to have prevented their meddling with government, and the administration of the civil and temporal affairs of the state; and to have managed in such a manner, that their dignity might have had nothing in common with secular dignities. But they ought not to have abolished the order itself; and though the salvation of the people does not
entirely

entirely depend on the legitimate or illegitimate vocation of their pastors, it is always a great misfortune to the church, and a subject of anxiety to the people, to have doubts on the validity of their ministry; and it is almost impossible not to have such doubts, when it is known that the Christian church, before the schism of the Protestants, never regarded such as true pastors; and that their intrusion is without authority, as it is without example. As it is, in fact, only to true and lawful pastors that the administration of all the spiritual functions was committed, if there remains any doubt, or any scruple, of the validity or legitimacy of their ministry, it cannot but breed anxiety and disquietude in

in timorous souls, whom it is of importance to set at ease by convincing them; that those who govern them hold their authority from Jesus Christ himself, who established them as ministers of his word, and of his sacraments.

24. The question about the number of sacraments is one of those points which might have been agitated in the schools, and of which it had been better not to have made an article of faith. It is certain, that in antiquity, the name of sacrament was given to other things besides Baptism and the Eucharist. It is also certain, that it was given to other rites besides those to which the church of Rome would now oblige us
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to extend it. This proves that the term is equivocal, that the sense of it is not very determinate, and has not been always the same. There is perhaps as much evil insatiation in the Protestants who have too much restrained this name, as in the Theologians of the Roman church in extending it too far. The middle way to take in this opposition would be to preserve the observances sufficiently authorised in the ancient church, without disputing about the names given to them, or dividing from one another for these names; since it is fulfilling all that we owe to the church, when we practise all that she has prescribed; and all that is essential here is, to act with religious dispositions, placing only our confidence in Jesus

Jesus Christ, who can sanctify us by himself, as well as by the means which he has furnished to conduct us to holiness, though they include not in themselves any natural sanctity, since all their efficacy is derived from the institution of Jesus Christ and his will.

25. It is Jesus Christ only, in fact, who can justify us, and we are bound to expect every thing from his favour, providing we answer to it with fidelity. In this all Christian societies agree with sufficient unanimity. But some Theologians would conclude from this, that our righteousness is purely imputative, while others maintain that it ought likewise to be inherent. It is
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of little importance, providing both parties agree, that we cannot be saved but by faith and good works. After once admitting the necessity of the one and of the others, there remains no more of the question but a name; for it is certain, that with regard to our sins we cannot be purified, but because they shall be no more imputed to us: but this non-imputation is insufficient, if the love of goodness, and the practice of virtue, do not make charity predominate in us, by an habitual and permanent disposition, which renders us agreeable to God, and worthy of his recompences.

26. The question concerning the merit of good works, is another dispute of words.

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All the world in general agree, that we cannot be saved without good works, and that these works are not meritorious but through Jesus Christ. After these acknowledgements, whether we say that there is a kind of merit in good works, or whether we deny this, under the pretext that we are justified by the merits of Jesus Christ, it is only disputing about words, and dividing the church for disputes, which ought not even to alter its amity, much less, break asunder the bonds of charity and concord.

27. To encourage us in the practice of virtue, and facilitate the means *for our attaining it*, Jesus Christ has instituted certain

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sacraments as instruments proper to cultivate it with efficacy. Of this number is Baptism, by which we engage ourselves to a profession of following the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and God is engaged on his part, to hold us justified from our sins, providing that, faithful to the engagement we have contracted with him, we regulate afterwards our conduct by the laws which he has prescribed to us, and which all tend to render us happy, by the right regulation of our passions, and the practice of virtue. To believe, that, without observing these conditions, Baptism, or any other external observance can sanctify us, is to be a Jew under the name of a Christian; and by changing the ceremony, we have not made
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our condition more advantageous, nor our hopes more solid, or less presumptuous. That efficacy which Christian divines ascribe to their observances, in preference to those of the Mosaic law, is without foundation; if we suppose that it is in their nature, and independent of our own internal dispositions, which ought to accompany the practice. Neither the one, nor the other, have any virtue but what they derive from the institution, and always in a dependency on the dispositions of those who embrace the practice. Under this view, all is equal, and if there be any difference, it is not in the nature of the observances that we are to look for it, but in the favour of Jesus Christ, who

manifests himself more abundantly under the Gospel, than under the Law.

28. The Baptism of Infants is of great antiquity in the church. It is even perhaps, the antiquity of this practice that gave rise to the idea of original sin, taken in the sense of the Theologians, for a guilt that drags all mankind who die without baptism, to damnation. This belief once established, has contributed indirectly to make the Baptism of Infants be judged necessary to their salvation; for if they had been considered as entirely pure and innocent, why, as Tertullian says, should we be so anxious to apply baptism for the remission of their sins? *Ut quid festinat innocens*

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ætas ad remissionem peccatorum. I do not see however, that Jesus Christ, or his apostles, have prescribed for them this baptism, which he seems only to have established to reclaim adults to repentance, and to the reception of the gospel, and in order to purify them thereby, from the sins of which they had been guilty before. I do not in fact find any thing in Scripture, that obliges us to extend to infants the necessity of baptism. It does not even appear after the practice was introduced, that it was judged as it is now, of this necessity, since it was very common then, to defer the reception of this sacrament to an advanced age, and even till death.

By speaking in this manner, it is not my intention, to censure a practice so ancient, and so general, as that of baptizing infants; but I would not for all this, consider it as an error in those, who believe baptism to be necessary to Adults only: for though I believe, as St. Paul teaches, that it was “by the first man that sin entered into the world, and death by sin *,” I can hardly conceive, that by this sin we must understand a personal guilt in every infant, in consequence of which, before he can use his will and his liberty, he deserves to be punished as a voluntary criminal, so as to be rendered not only subject to miseries

* Rom. V. 12.

and

and infirmities, but moreover liable to eternal damnation.

29. Every part of the Christian doctrine has had its alterations, and that part of it which respects the Eucharist has undergone as many at least as what relates to other observances. Jesus Christ, in giving us bread and wine as the memorials of his passion and death, has declared to us that he gave us his body, and his blood. On this *subject* it has been imagined, not only that Jesus Christ was *in reality* corporeally present in the Eucharist, with all his physical proprieties, but moreover, that the substance of the bread and wine was

annihilated, and remained only in appearances, and this is what was called *Transubstantiation*. Had they been contented with saying, that this change was such to the eyes of faith, which see nothing in the Eucharist after consecration, but the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and without supposing any real and physical change of substance, there would have been nothing in this contrary to reason, or which needed to have occasioned the least dispute. But in matters of faith there was a constant inclination to the marvellous, and often even the marvellous, was not to the taste of the multitude, but in so far as it shocked common ideas, and the ordinary light of reason. Accordingly this opinion did not
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spring up, but in the ages of ignorance and of darkness. Till then they were contented to believe, that in receiving the Eucharist, they received the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, but without determining in what manner they received it; or rather, persuaded that grace does not destroy nature, they received the bread and wine, not doubting, but that in receiving them, they received Jesus Christ himself, because he communicated himself under these symbols, in a manner ineffable, and perfectly spiritual, with so much the more efficacy, as by the institution of Jesus Christ the said symbols are a lively representation of his passion and death, by which he merited for us, the expiation of our sins and salvation.

tion. We receive therefore Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, but with the bread and wine; and if we admit another *Transubstantiation* than that which is made in the eyes of faith, we admit an absurd opinion, which it is impossible to maintain without contradicting the most evident maxims of reason, the constant impressions of our senses, and the principles of our natural light.

30. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is so great a benefit, that we cannot too much preserve the memory of it. It was to perpetuate its remembrance that he instituted the Eucharist, in which we recollect his death, and offer ourselves to God. This is the sense of all Christian liturgies, ancient
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and modern, Catholic and Heretical. Nothing therefore is worse founded, than *outrée* declamations against the Mass, since, with some variation only in the prayers and ceremonies, there is still the same object in this Romish service, as in all other liturgies. Whether we believe that Jesus Christ is corporeally present in the Eucharist, or, as others maintain, that this presence is only spiritual, this does not add any thing to, or take any thing from the idea of sacrifice, an idea which ought not to be separated from the remembrance and offering of the death of Jesus Christ, in the celebration of the Eucharist. And as this sacrifice can only be representative and commemorative of that of the cross, all ob-

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jections made against the Mass, fall to the ground of themselves, because they go to attack in it, a real sacrifice, which subsists only in the imaginations of those who combat it, or in the false explications of those who defend it.

31. Communion under both kinds never ought to have excited contestation in the church. I see no more difficulty in this matter than in the difference of administering baptism by immersion, or by aspersion. But I know not by what misfortune it happens so often, that the smallest disputes excite the greatest troubles, as we may judge, from the ancient contest, about the day of Easter. The most rational

tional way of thinking on the dispute in question is, that as, on the one part, an usage occasioned by some inconveniencies ought not to have been erected into a law, against the terms of the institution ; and, on the other, as Christians believe that Jesus Christ, is only spiritually received in the Eucharist, it seems that it ought to have been *left* indifferent, to receive him either under one kind, or under both the two kinds, forasmuch as a spiritual presence is absolutely indivisible, and it is impossible to receive Jesus Christ, in receiving either the bread, or the wine, without receiving him entirely. It appears to me, that on this point, as on many others, we ought to leave to each church the liberty of regulating

lating its usages, as it thinks proper. But the best are those who depart least from the words of the institution, and the views of the institutor.

32. Confession is an useful practice, and of great antiquity in the church; but the manner in which it is practised at this day, in the Roman church, is an usage much more modern. Formerly people made confessions of great crimes, and especially of those which were of a public nature. There are proofs of this in the writings of the fathers, and in the penitential canons, which regulated the times of penitence ordained for each of these *flagrant* crimes. But we see nothing in the ancientest

cientest monuments of these confessions so often reiterated, of the smallest faults, nor of the laws made for the ordination of confession at certain times. Nor is it clear besides, whether this sort of confession was instituted by Jesus Christ, or whether it was only prescribed by the church. It appears much most probable, on the contrary, that the kind of confession practised at this day, can only have been of the institution last mentioned, since we find no example of it in primitive times.

33. The satisfactions prescribed by the ancient canons, have always been regarded as a necessary sequel of public or private confession. The example due to the church

church for the reparation of scandals, the necessity of recovering ourselves from vice by such means, and of removing from us as far as possible the occasions of relapsing into it, and the obligation of marking to God a lively resentment of sorrow for having offended him, authorize both the practice of the church, with regard to canonical penances, and the name of satisfactions which the ancients gave them. Nobody ever pretended before the Protestants, that this practice annihilated the merit of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ; for the church does not suppose such satisfactions meritorious, but only by the efficacy they derive from his *satisfaction*, as the Council of Trent teaches, “ bringing
“ forth

“ forth fruits worthy of repentance,
 “ which have their efficacy from him,
 “ are by him offered to the Father, and
 “ through him, accepted by the Fa-
 “ ther *.” After such an acknowledge-
 ment, if it be not the mere name of sa-
 tisfactions, which the Protestants con-
 demn; besides that, the Catholics have
 the authority of most of the fathers to
 justify their language, it is knowing lit-
 tle of the duties of charity, to break it
 for a contestation so frivolous, as a single
 dispute on a word.

34. The imposition of satisfactions oc-
 casioned the concession of indulgences, and

* Sess. XIV. cap. 3.

this concession cannot be condemned, but by the abuse that has been made of it. In their origin, indulgences were only a relaxation of canonical penalties, which the church judged proper to impose for certain great crimes, on purpose to inspire a horror at them; and to restrain, by the fear of this severity of discipline, those who might be tempted to abandon themselves to them, and to repair the scandal given by those who had been so unfortunate as to fall under such temptations. There is no room to doubt, but that the church which imposed these penalties, had a power to dispense with them, and it was to this dispensation that the name of indulgence

indulgence was given. There is nothing in this contrary to reason, since the same authority which makes laws, has certainly the right to suspend them, or to dispense with the observation of them.

But this doctrine has been strangely abused. In suppressing the use of canonical penances, or permitting its abolishment, indulgence ceased to take place, not through defect of power in the church, but for want of occasions for exercising it. Nevertheless there was still an inclination to make use of this power, regardless of the reasons which had established it, but which subsisted no more; and it was this

that has produced the abuses, and the scandals.

Indulgences have been granted without reason, and they have been multiplied without necessity. The fruits of them have been applied to purposes not sufficiently serious, and full of superstition. A scandalous traffic has been made of them, and they have been given for actions, rather criminal than meritorious. The extravagance has been carried so far as even to extend them to the dead, to whom they could be of no use. In a word, the people was seduced by being inspired with a false confidence in them ; and, instead of contributing to their salvation, they have operated
only

only to their abuse and destruction. Lo, these were the fruits of modern indulgences. I do not take upon me to contest with the church the power that she has to give them for just and reasonable causes. But I believe that in the present state of the church, it would be most proper not to grant them any longer, and that the Protestants have had just reason to condemn the abuses of them, and to raise their voices against the scandalous use that has been made of them.

35. The article of images has excited great divisions in the church. Some, for honouring them have been taxed with idolatry, and those who have de-

stroyed them have been accused of irreligion. This is carrying things too far, both on the one side, and on the other. Images have nothing bad in themselves, it cannot, however, be denied, but that they have occasioned great abuse, and great superstitions. It is not, therefore, so much on a religious, as on a prudential account, that we ought to be cautious in judging of our conduct with respect to them. If abuse and superstition are inseparable from the use of them, piety and religion oblige us to suppress them. If we can, on the contrary, separate the use of them from superstitious worship, we may preserve them with utility, for the instruction of the people, and the ornament of churches. This

was

was the temperate step which the churches of France took formerly, and almost all those of the West, to the tenth century; and they had then no conception, that by so doing, they did any thing contrary to the second precept of the decalogue. This, even now, might be considered as the most reasonable way, especially if it was only confined to historical paintings, and went to the exclusion of the images or the statues of particular saints. But if the fear of abuse prevails over the mind, I see not why we should impute it as a crime, who, with-held by an apprehension so religious and so well founded, actually suppress what they consider as an occasion of so much abuse, and a source of superstition.

36. What I have said of images, may likewise be applied to relics. The honour that has been paid to them in the Greek and Latin churches, is almost as ancient as the church itself. There has been a great deal of indecency, and a kind of fury, in the manner in which Protestants treated them in the beginning of the Reformation. They might have reason for censuring as they did the excess to which superstition had been carried on this point, either by giving false relics for true ones, or by rendering *outrée* worship to such as were not suspected of falshood. The evil was extreme, and too much of the remains of it are still in conservation, not to feel, that their reproaches on this head were too
just,

just, and well founded. But still they might have carried themselves with more moderation in the reform of these abuses. Religion forbids us not, but on the contrary excites us, to honour the ashes of those whom their sanctity has rendered respectable to us; and even the honour that we render to their memory, is a powerful motive to excite us to imitate their virtues. But to entertain an imagination that there is any virtue, or any efficacy, inherent in their ashes, or their tombs, which can operate the miracles that God may grant sometimes to the faith of those who reclaim their succours, and supplicate Him to hear the prayers, which there is some reason to believe the saints offer up to him for us,

is to place efficacy and virtue where there is none. To found a confidence upon this, is to entertain a vain and unreasonable confidence, and to confound the honour due to their virtue with the confidence that we ought to put in God only, and which cannot be participated with any of all his creatures.

37. We ought to honour the Saints, because virtue and sanctity are universally honourable, wherever they are found. On this point there is no doubt, or dispute. The only question is, to know in what this honour consists. It is unanimously agreed, that we ought to revere their memory, to glorify God for the favours which he
heaped

heaped upon them, and endeavour to imitate their examples. So far all the world agrees, and if we could but state with precision the honour we ought to render them, the different Christian societies would have no farther contest upon this head.

But the Catholics exact something too much; they teach that it is good and useful to invoke the saints, and to have recourse to their prayers and intercessions, and that it is heretical to deny, it's being both permitted, and meritorious to invoke them; or to maintain, that this invocation is an idolatry contrary to the word of God, and the honour of Jesus Christ, our only mediator. The Protestants on the

contrary pretend, that Jesus Christ being alone our true mediator, it is neither necessary, nor useful to have recourse to saints; that their invocation partakes of idolatry, and is at least full of superstition; that in the uncertainty in which we are, whether, or how they can promote our prayers, *or render them more available*, there is an absurdity in addressing them to them; that to demand their favours, or deliverance from certain evils, as if they had the power of granting us these favours in themselves, is a vain and superstitious worship; and finally, since the Scripture does not command us to invoke them, it is wrong to attempt to make this an obligation, and to condemn those who abstain,

as if they were, for so doing culpable of any impiety.

In this opposition of sentiments, it seems to me that there is an excess both on the one part, and on the other. The Romish church believes, that it is useful to invoke the saints, but it does not decide that this is necessary. It teaches not that they are the authors of the favours that we request through their intercession, but that they join their prayers to ours, to help us to obtain them by their credit; that to invoke saints, is to have recourse to their prayers, to obtain the benefits of God through Jesus Christ; that in what terms soever we conceive the prayers which are addressed to them, it is always in this sense that they ought

ought to be understood, and that it is properly to God they are addressed, to supplicate him to hear the prayers which we suppose they address to him, for us, as almost all the collects which we find in the liturgic books of the church, seem to indicate; and finally, that we only address the saints to obtain from God the things which we request, as we apply to good men still in life, under an idea that they, being more acceptable to God by their *superior* virtues than we ourselves, are more likely to be heard. All these ideas certainly have nothing in them contrary to Religion, or that favours of idolatry, or of superstition.

But at the same time it appears to me that there is an excess, in taxing with impiety

piety those who disapprove of the invocation of saints, since they only censure this invocation from a motive of religion, that is to say, because they believe it injurious to the mediation of Jesus Christ, and founded on a principle very uncertain, I mean to say, on the knowledge that we suppose they have of our prayers, and of our wants, which is not recommended by the word of God ; we cannot disown, at the same time, though the doctrine of the Romish church on this head has nothing in it which approaches to idolatry, that the practice of the people *in it*, has not been in this respect superstitious, and such as it is almost impossible to justify, or even to excuse ; that their prayers have not been full of expressions,

sions that lead us to consider the saints as the authors of the favours demanded through them ; that they have been often addressed to them, without *applying ultimately* * to God, or to Jesus Christ. *It cannot be disowned* but that they consider them (the saints) as having, under their particular patronage, the concession of certain favours, or the deliverance from certain evils; nor can it be denied, in a word, that they have attributed to them a sort of subordinate divinity, not very dissimilar to what the pagans attributed to their tutelar Genii. In this respect the censure of Protestants is but too just ; and it is only too

* *Sans remonter ni a Dieu ni a Jesus Christ.*

true, that they have had reason to condemn the *outrée* confidence of Catholics in this sort of devotion, the rather, that though it is certain, God can communicate to saints the knowledge of the different wants of the faithful, it is not so certain that he has in fact, imparted to them this communication ; and a worship in this in certitude, though seemingly religious, is not without a mixture of superstition. But I would neither tax with idolatry those who render such worship ; nor with impiety, those who reject it.

38. That which has occasioned or fortified the schism of the church, is, that on certain occasions there has been an incli-

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nation

nation to prescribe as necessary, observances, which, though good in themselves, ought to have been left to the liberty of particular churches. On other occasions, an inclination has been discovered to make laws of practices, which appear less reasonable than even the contrary practices.

39. Of the last-mentioned kind of *practices*, is the custom of reciting divine service in a foreign language. Extensive as this usage may be, and though followed in most of the communions of the middle age, and even of those who were separatists from the Romish church, I do not find it, however, the most conformable to reason. It appears to me contrary to the
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end that we ought to propose in prayer, and to the efficacy that we have a right to expect from it; for of what use is prayer, if we know not what we request? and what can be its efficacy, if the prayer itself cannot serve to enlighten the understanding, and to warm the heart? Such, however, must be the consequence of prayer in a strange tongue*. The understanding cannot be enlightened, because it does not comprehend the meaning of what is spoken, nor can the heart be benefited by emotions which it is impossible it can feel, since we can neither love nor

* The meaning is, that such prayer can neither cultivate the understanding, nor benefit the heart.

desire, what we do neither know nor understand. What, therefore, can be produced to justify a practice so opposite to what reason dictates to us? The custom of some ages, or of sundry nations, cannot authorize a thing absurd in itself, especially when it is as contrary to Scripture, as it is to reason. Our fore-fathers' performance of their prayers in this way, far from being able to make an authority, requires an apology. Let us excuse them if we can on the scores of their simplicity, and unenlightened submission; but let us not make a rule of a senseless docility, the principle of which, however laudable it may be in itself, cannot be justified in the eyes of reason.

I pre-

I pretend not, however, that we ought to rent the church by schism to avoid such an abuse : but I should willingly reject the crime of schism upon those, who, to maintain the foresaid abuse, would cut off from their communion Christian societies, who followed in this point, a practice contrary to their own, and who refused to submit to a law they judged contrary to their reason, and to the edification of their members.

40. Of the other kind *, are the laws of fastings, the distinction of meats, feasts,

* Observances good in themselves, which ought to be left free to particular churches. See Art. 38. p. 97.

and such like practices, which have been observed by so many saints, and recommended in the purest ages of Christianity, which have nothing but what is good in themselves, or, at least, nothing bad; but which, at the same time, having nothing positively prescribed about them in the law of God, ought not, of course, to be put on a footing with those which spring from an authority superior to that of the church. The Protestants did wrong in wishing to represent these observances as so many remains of Judaism, and as favouring of superstition. But on the other side, to make religion consist in these external practices, to urge the obligation of them, as of so many things necessary to
 salva-

salvation, and to regard the omission of them, as if equally criminal with the transgression of moral laws, or of the positive institutions that come to us from God himself, is to carry things too far, and an attempt in some sort, to put the authority of men, on an equal footing with that of God himself.

I would not, however, when I say this, lead any person to think, that I leave every body at liberty to violate this sort of laws at pleasure. No man ought to presume to do so, when he cannot transgress them without scandal; and reasons of charity or of necessity, are the only reasons that ought to authorise him to do it. But, on

the other side, if national churches do not judge it proper to submit to this sort of laws, or think that they ought to leave their members at liberty, without imposing such a yoke on their consciences, I do not believe that this ought to be imputed to them as a crime; nor ought we to treat, as a sin, the omission of these practices which have no other merit than they derive, not from their nature, but from the motives, or the intentions of those who have recommended them, or submitted to them; and which, not being prescribed by the law of God, can lay no obligation except on the particular churches who have adopted them, and even among them only for the time

time they judge proper to observe the practice.

41. The Celibacy of Ecclesiastics is likewise of this same kind, being one of those observances to which the Catholics of the Latin church obliged their clergy, without having the prescription of the divine law on their side. The motive which led this church to prescribe it had certainly nothing in it but what was pure and laudable; for it was only in the view of rendering them more devoted to their functions, more detached from worldly affairs, and more in a condition to employ themselves wholly in the instruction and sanctification of the faithful committed to their

their care. But the effects have not always corresponded to these holy views; and the natural inclinations of men to marriage, often prevailed over the laws that interdicted them from it, and have introduced among them a scandalous use of concubinage, instead of a lawful union. Hence the pious intentions of the legislators have been perverted; and the severity of laws has served only to introduce a disorder, designed to have been prevented by celibacy.

To remedy this evil, new reformers therefore have not only permitted, but even recommended, the marriage of their ministers; and by these means have prevented,

vented, many scandalous practices that sprang from the law of celibacy. But the remedy has not been without its inconveniencies, many of which it was the intention of the law of continence to have prevented. I mean to say, an over-interestedness in worldly affairs, and too little application to the cure of souls; I add not a syllable of the embarrassments and anxieties, which are almost infallibly the consequences of marriage. Without considering, therefore, celibacy as a virtue, or regarding the marriage of the clergy as a crime, if the question was simply, which of these two states was best adapted for the clergy, I own that I would prefer the first, as the most suitable. But if the point be,

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to make this a law, I am not hardy enough to decide upon it, and I leave the decision to better judges.

42. The article of the vows of continence and religion, has so much relation to that of the celibacy of the clergy, that there would be a suspicious affectation, in my not explaining myself upon the one, as well as on the other. The Protestants have condemned these vows as rash, presumptuous, and injurious to those of baptism; and an encroachment on liberty so much the more dangerous, as the person, at the age fixed for it, cannot answer for herself, that it will be in her power to observe her engagements. The Catholics, on the
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contrary, represent this engagement as an act of the highest virtue, and as an action the most meritorious in the world. This, perhaps, is overstretching things on both sides. The vow of continence is not in itself a virtue, but a condition of life, without either intrinsic merit or demerit; all the advantage of which consists in furnishing more amply the means, and facility of fulfilling the essential duties of Christianity. This state has always been very much respected in the Christian church, from the earliest times of it's establishment; and in blaming it, the Protestants have certainly receded from the sense and ideas of antiquity. But some Catholics, by exalting it to excess, and by confound-
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ing it with virtue itself, and religion, have fallen into as dangerous a mistake as their adversaries, by substituting for religion and virtue, what was only introduced to facilitate the means, and the practice of them.

If there be temerity and presumption in those who embrace this state from a transient movement of devotion, and without having first proved themselves sufficiently, yet they cannot be so taxed, who do it with knowledge, and after sufficient experience. Besides vows which are made solely for the better observation of those of baptism, cannot be injurious to that sacrament. And as for the objection that is made against it, as being an encroachment on
natural

natural liberty, it may be replied in answer, that there is nothing in this religious state more contrary to liberty, than there is in that of marriage, where one is bound indissolubly, and for the most part, without knowing sufficiently, either one's self, or the person with whom the obligation is contracted. For all this, the only remedy to prevent the danger would be, not to permit religious vows to be taken, but at an age so far advanced, that the devotee might be able to answer for herself.

In this the Catholics have acted perhaps, without precaution ; and it has been, without doubt, the wish of many good people, that the liberty of undertaking engagements

gagements in this kind, might be put off to a more advanced age, in order to prevent repentance, and scandal. If this were done, there would be nothing but what is pious and estimable in a vocation, which removes an infinitude of temptations, leaves scarce any object capable of furnishing aliment to the passions, and which, by removing from those who betake themselves to it, the glare of the pomp and vanities of the world, and by delivering them from its solitudes, procures them more easy means of *walking with God*, and working out their salvation in peace: I cannot therefore, on these reasons, condemn vows of this nature, although I wish, as many well-informed and pious people have done,

that they were generally made with more knowledge, and at an age more mature, and more experienced.

43. After having declared my sentiments on Religion, and the disputes that divide us, there remains nothing more, but that I should explain myself on the means which ought to be employed to conduct people to truth. I know of only two ways, namely, persuasion, or violence and persecution; for, as to what relates to the way of authority, I have disclosed my thoughts sufficiently, in speaking above, of the authority of Scripture, or that of the church, or of Councils.

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Nothing

Nothing appears to me more contrary to the maxims of reason, or of religion, than the way of persecution. There is nothing, says Lactantius, so voluntary as religion; and if the mind of him to whom it is announced, conceives an aversion to it, it is no more religion, and it is totally annihilated. Religion ought to be defended, not by murders, but by reasons; not by cruelty, but by patience; not by criminality, but by faith. *Defendenda Religio, non occidendo, sed monendo; non sævitiâ, sed patientiâ; non scelere, sed fide.*——*Nibil enim est tam voluntarium quam Religio, in quâ si animus sacrificantis averfuse est, jam sublata, jam nulla*

nulla est *. Such also was the doctrine of Tertullian, of St. Athanasius, of St. Hilary, and of other fathers, who have judged wisely, that violence was more likely to inspire an aversion to religion, than to promote it ; and that as it could not contribute to enlighten the understanding, it could answer no other end, than to render the people persecuted, either libertines or hypocrites, and perhaps, both the one and the other.

* “ Religion is to be defended, not by killing,
 “ but by advising ; not by cruelty, but by patience ;
 “ not by villainy, but by belief.—For there is
 “ nothing so voluntary as religion, in which, if
 “ the mind of the sacrificer be averse, the religion
 “ is already withdrawn, it is already null.” LACT.

In fact, since religion consists only in a voluntary acquiescence in truths, that God has revealed to us, or, that our natural reason gives us the knowledge of without revelation; and, in a submission equally free, to that which God prescribes to us, it is evidently contrary to reason, to pretend to subject mens minds without enlightening them, as a blind consent to what is proposed to them, is a method as proper, to lead them to embrace error as truth. But violence cannot enlighten the understanding, since it proposes no reason; and as those who employ force, are often less enlightened than those whom they would constrain to submission, it is absurd to imagine, that a belief received in this way, can ever be regarded as an act agreeable to God, and proper to pro-

procure salvation to any person whatever, who has no other motive but violence for submitting to it.

If therefore a blind belief cannot justify any body, and if violence cannot procure an enlightened faith, there remains no other rational way for conducting men to truth in a salutary manner, but persuasion, which operates in different ways, according to the capacities of those to whom the doctrine of salvation is proposed; that is to say, in convincing men capable of reasoning, by evident, or at least very probable arguments; and the simple, by facts suited to their comprehension, which manifest to them the power of God, and the proofs of his

his authority, in the support that he has given to the first preachers of the Gospel. It was thus, that Christianity at first spread itself over the world, and it is likewise in the same manner, that we ought to continue to use our best endeavours to promote its reception.

It is true, that from the time the doctrine of the Gospel gained an ascendancy in the empire, and after princes began to countenance the preaching of it, they often employed both authority, and penal laws to make Pagans submit to it, or to suppress Heretics. But if their intentions were pious, the mean they made use of, was neither just, nor reasonable, since

since it was not at all adapted to the end for which they employed it. For these laws being unserviceable for the conviction of enlightened people, and incapable of furnishing any instruction to the simple, and having besides been as often used to support errors as truth ; what other effect could be expected from them, but forcing cowards to become hypocrites, or destroying those who could not resolve to act against their consciences ?

Of this we may convince ourselves by reading the history of the church : and on this supposition, I cannot persuade myself that persecution in matters of religion can be justified, either on the maxims of the

Gospel, or of reason: and I believe, that Toleration is the only method that accords both with the one, and with the other. Civil government may find some inconveniencies in this method, but there are still more in persecution; and in matters of religion, it is by equitable, and reasonable, and not by inconvenient, principles, that we are to conduct ourselves.

Such very nearly are my ideas of religion, on the disputes that divide us, and on the means the most proper to make Christianity appear rational in the eyes of men, and to re-unite them in spite of some differ-

differences of opinions. It must happen without doubt, that these ideas will not be relished by many people. Moderate sentiments are rarely to the taste of different parties; and instead of serving to conciliate divisions, they serve ordinarily, only to attract censures on those who propose them. But as in making this Declaration, I proposed to myself no other approbation than that of God, and of my own conscience, it is sufficient for me to have sincerely exposed, what appears to me most conformable to truth, and to peace. If I am deceived, it has been in an honest way; and I hope that God in his mercy will pardon my involuntary errors, and grant me in the

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other life, the information which has been
refused me in this.

[Signed]

PIERRE FRANÇOIS COURAYER.

London, March 25,
1767.

E R R A.

ERRATUM.

The reference for the words quoted from St. JOHN, in paragraph 19. p. 48, *quod vidimus, et audivimus, annuntiamus vobis*, "That which we "have seen and heard declare we unto you;" is wrong both in the original, and in the translation.—For, John i. 1, 3. r. 1 John i. 3.

FINIS.